Chas. H. Cummings.

C/ 75¢

Geo. Clark

Stop a minute, Jake, I'll resk it. It's time I was my own mistress any how. I know sister Maguire'll say it's tew gay for me, and call it flambergasted, but I dont care.—
Page 117.

THE

WIDOW BEDOTT PAPERS

BY

FRANCES M. WHITCHER.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

ALICE B. NEAL.

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CONTENTS.

I.

Hezekiah Bedott..... 21

II.

The Widow Essays Poetry..... 27

III.

Widow Jenkins' Animosity..... 32

IV.

Mr. Crane Walks in..... 39

V.

The Widow Discourses of Pumpkins..... 47

VI.

The Widow Loses her Beau..... 59

VII.

Mr. Crane about to Propose..... 70

VIII.

Mr. Crane Walks out..... 79

IX.

The Widow "Sets her Cap"..... 86

X

The Widow Resolves to leave Wiggletown..... 95

XI.

The Widow Trades with a Peddler..... 107

XII.

The Widow and Aunt Maguire Discourse on Various Topics 119

XIII.

The Widow having heard that Elder Sniffles is Sick, Writes to him 134

XIV.

The Widow resorts to Elder Sniffles for Religious Instruction..... 141

XV.

The Widow concludes to Publish..... 152

XVI.

The Widow Prepares to Receive Elder Sniffles on Thanksgiving-Day..... 161

XVII.

The Widow Retires to a Grove in the Rear of Elder Sniffles' House..... 175

XVIII.

The Widow Writes to her Daughter, Mrs. Jupiter Smith.. 184

XIX.

The Rev. Mrs. Sniffles Abroad..... 191

XX.

The Rev. Mrs. Sniffles at Home..... 204

XXI.

The Rev. Mrs. Sniffles Expresses her Sentiments in Regard to the Parsonage 222

XXII.

Aunt Maguire's Experience 232

XXIII.

Aunt Maguire's Description of the Donation Party..... 245

XXIV.

Aunt Maguire Treats of the Contemplated Sewing Society at Scrabble Hill 273

XXV.

Aunt Maguire Continues her Account of the Sewing Society 293

XXVI.

Aunt Maguire's Visit to Slabtown..... 313

XXVII.

Visit to Slabtown continued..... 330

XXVIII.

Mrs. Maguire's Account of Deacon Whipple..... 345

XXIX.

Mrs. Mudlaw's Recipe for Potato Pudding..... 359

XXX.

Morning Calls; or Every body's Particular Friend..... 383

INTRODUCTORY.

The Bedott Papers—now for the first time collected, were first widely introduced to public notice through the columns of "Neal's Saturday Gazette."

Its editor—Joseph C. Neal, the well known author of the "Charcoal Sketches," was struck by the originality and clearness of the first of the series, when submitted among the mass of contributions, which crowd a weekly newspaper. It was scarcely in print before the author's name began to be asked by subscribers, casual readers, and brother editors, some of whom attributed them to Mr. Neal himself. They could scarcely be made to believe that sketches so full of humor, so remarkable for minute observation of human nature, were the work of an unpracticed pen.

A correspondence arising in this way between the editor and his unknown contributor, Mr. Neal learned that "the Widow Bedott," as she was familiarly called, had not even entered the "holy estate," but was still the center of a happy home circle, in Whitesboro', New York. That she had never before written for publication, and was so sensitively modest, and indeed unaware of her remarkable talent as a humorist, that she was quite willing to cease then and there

the history of the Widow's adventures. Mr. Neal's reply to this despondent mood, was perhaps decisive as regards the continuation of the series, and we quote it as preserved among her papers. It has the more value as being the unsolicited opinion of a practical critic who possessed the keenest natural sense of humor.

"PHILADELPHIA, September 10th, 1846.

"MY DEAR CORRESPONDENT BEDOTT:

"Your last contributions have been received, and are truly welcome. The "Gazette" is again deeply your debtor; for your aid has been indeed truly valuable to "Neal." But I regret to find that Duberly Doubtington has cast a "glamour" over you about continuing in the comic vein, just at the moment too, when all the world is full of Bedott. Our readers talk of nothing else, and almost despise "Neal" if the Widow be not there. An excellent critic in these matters, said to me the other day, that he regarded them as the best Yankee papers yet written, and such is indeed the general sentiment. I know for instance, of a lady who for several days after reading one of them, was continually, and often, at moments the most inopportune, bursting forth into fits of violent laughter, and believe me that you, gifted with such powers, ought not to speak disparagingly of the gift which thus brings wholesome satire home to every reader. It is a theory of mine that *those gifted with truly humorous genius, like yourself, are more useful as moralists, philosophers, and teachers, than whole legions of the gravest preachers. They speak more effectually to the general ear and heart even though they who hear are not aware of the fact that they are imbibing wisdom.*

"To be sure, if you have more imperative duties, I should be the last to wish that you should neglect them; but it

your hesitations arise from other scruples, it appears to me that if you were to weigh them well they may be found mere intangibilities. But of all this you, of course, must be the judge, and any interference on my part would be intrusive and impertinent.

"But I would add that Mr. Godey called on me to inquire as to the authorship of the "Bedott Papers" wishing evidently to obtain you for a correspondent to the "Lady's Book." I declined giving him the name, etc., until I had consulted you, checking the selfish impulse that would have denied him, that "Neal" might monopolize a correspondent so valued as "Frank." Would you like to hear from him on the subject?

"Think on it then before yielding up the pen of comedy, but in any event, whether you conclude to be either serious or comic,

"Believe me ever yours,
"Joseph C. Neal."

The result of Mr. Godey's negotiations will be found in "Aunt Maguire's Experience"—Aunt Maguire, being certainly worthy of her distinguished relationship.*

The New Year found Miriam Berry a bride, and separated from the cherished and cherishing home circle, with new duties and responsibilities as the wife of a clergyman. Yet to quote from a charming memorial from the pen of an almost equally gifted sister, "Her sketches even under these circumstances, require neither vindication nor apology. They were never condemned by any except those who felt

* We may here add that, as in the case of Mr. Neal, the friendly interest of the courteous editor of the "Lady's Book" deepened from that time, and it is with his warmest approval and predictions of success that the volume containing both series, is now issued.

the sting of her satire pricking against their vices. The good sense of the entire reading public gave them praise and their popularity was abundantly shown in the eagerness with which the country press copied them from the Philadelphia papers. Her humor was chaste and original, so true to nature that the most ignorant reader could not fail to feel its force, and the most refined could discover nothing that would shock the keenest sensibility. From the time of Horace to the present, it has always been thought proper and often profitable, to 'speak the truth laughing.' And the best moralists have acknowleged that laughter, when aimed at folly, was a salutary means of improvement, and a great aid to virtue. Indeed we have the precedent of Inspiration itself, to use the most pointed satire in our attempts to promote the welfare of our fellows. And this was her only aim; for, whether she depicted the verbosity of the self-sufficient preacher, or portrayed the vulgar coqueteries of the inconsolable widow—whether she held up to view the would-be literary circle, or narrated the gossip of the sewing-society, her only object was

> "'the gift to gie 'em
> To see themsels as others see 'em!
> Which wad frae monie a blunder free 'em,
> An' foolish notion.'"

Such, then, was the origin of the "Bedott Papers," their characteristics and their aim. By the early death of their wonderfully gifted author, they have become a literary heritage to her family, and the publication has been decided upon by them after repeated solicitations from both

strangers and friends, who were anxious to have in a collected and accessible form articles they had enjoyed so much as fugitive sketches. For ourselves, we have never had but one opinion. We remember, as if had been but yesterday, the mirth-moved family circle that listened to the reading of the first of the series with almost convulsive laughter; and from that time until we corrected the proof-sheets of the last, considered them among the cleverest, as they certainly were the most popular of any humorous articles by an American author.

Though among Mrs. W——'s* warmest personal friends, we never had the often desired pleasure of meeting her face to face. Yet it is through a correspondence bequeathed to us, as the successor to Mr. Neal's editorial engagements, and some of his most genial friendships, that the sister before alluded to, gathered much of the material for a sketch of her life and character.

Never was there a more remarkable contrast presented, and we quote her own words, for the causes operating to produce it.

"Your last kind letter was very gratifying. The acquisition of a new friend is a source of great pleasure to me; for I assure you that it has never been my lot to have many friends. And I will tell you what I believe to be the secret of it: I received at my birth, the undesirable gift of a remarkably strong sense of the ridiculous. I can scarcely remember the time when the neighbors were not afraid that

* Miss Berry was subsequently married to Rev. B. W. Whicher, of Whitesboro', N. Y.

I would 'make fun of them.' For indulging in this propen sity, I was scolded at home, and wept over and prayed with, by certain well-meaning old maids in the neighborhood; but all to no purpose. The only reward of their labors was frequently their likenesses drawn in charcoal and pinned to the corners of their shawls, with, perhaps, a descriptive verse below. Of course I had not many friends, even among my own playmates. And yet, at the bottom of all this deviltry, there was a warm, affectionate heart—if any were really kind to me, how I loved them!

"I think now, that I was not properly trained. My errors should have been checked in a different way from that which was adopted. I ought to have received more tender treatment. I became a lonely child, almost without companionship; wandering alone, for hours, in the woods and fields, creating for myself an ideal world, and in that ideal world I lived for many years. At times I was melancholy almost to despair. My reserve and sadness were called haughtiness and pride. When the best part of my life, or rather what should have been the best part of it, was gone, I met my husband. He was the first who pene trated the icy vail about me, sympathized with me, and turned my feet into a better path than they had trodden before."

A modest, humble-hearted Christian woman "at the bot tom of all this," as she says, she remained until her pen was laid aside for the last time, and she passed to a home where all doubt and misunderstanding are denied an entrance.

"How she looked, spoke and moved," those who read these sketches will doubtless ask, as did we, at an early period of the correspondence. It was met by her with a playful rhymed response, of which we can recall but a fragment, declaring she had

> "Hands and feet
> Of respectable size,
> *Mud-colored* hair,
> And dubious eyes."

To the last, she evaded any thing like the self-portraiture so common among a certain class of female writers, who are as willing to give their faces as their sketches to the public.

Since this would still seem to be the feeling of those most easily interested, we pass to the peculiar artistic cleverness of the original illustrations, which usually accompanied her "Table Talks." They were done as rapidly as her pencil could move, a few strokes "telling the whole story." Of the rise and progress of this remarkable talent, we have some characteristic anecdotes in Miss Berry's sketch of her sister's childhood.

"Her school education was more varied than beneficial. Her first teacher was a sour-faced woman, who knocked the alphabet with her thimble into the heads of a little group of unruly children, at so much 'a quarter,' with small love, and no just appreciation of the dawning minds under her care. It was the unwise and cruel practice, then more generally than at present, though still not quite exploded, of sending little creatures, only four or five years old, to be shut up in a school-room six hours of each day.

"But there was one good custom then, which, where our limited observation extends, seems to be quite unthought of, if not despised, in the present girls' schools—that of teaching the pupils to sew. The object now appears to be to instruct them most in what they shall least need to know afterward. Well, little Miriam was told by her teacher to bring some kind of work to busy herself with in school; so, being furnished with a long narrow strip of old muslin, she went prepared to take her first lesson in the art of "scolloping." How steadily the small hands stitched away, till the child was summoned by her serious-faced teacher to the table, to have her work inspected. What was Miss ——'s amazement on discovering that Miriam had adhered but a very little way to her pattern, when, leaving it entirely, she had worked a long row of *heads* on the muslin, after a stitch of her own choosing.

"'What a pity,' said the careful woman who spoke with a strong nasal accent, 'to waste all that 'ere nice muslin! Jest take it home, and fetch some old stuff to-morrow; and work it good, too. Don't make any more of them heads.'

"But Miriam had a piece of bran-new muslin given to her at home, when she repeated her teacher's orders, with the permission to make as many heads on it as she pleased. Whether this act of high-handed rebellion was continued, we know not; for, in telling the story, as we have heard her do with many amusing accessories, she proceeded no further. This little incident, it would seem, was the most deeply impressed upon her memory of any thing connected with her first school-teacher.

"A second time was little Miriam introduced within the walls of the academy, but under a new and quite different dynasty. The principal was the kindest hearted and most indulgent of pedagogues, well skilled in mathematics and learned in all classic lore; greatly successful, moreover, in 'fitting young men for college,' as the phrase goes. But the younger fry were left to take care of themselves, or at most received a kind of desultory instruction from some older pupil, while their misbehavior was kindly overlooked by the classical master. Lightly passed her school-days now, but her education, in the true sense of the word was advancing. Within the school-house walls, the child's already observant mind and keen perception of the ludicrous found occupation and food in watching the countenances and conduct of those who surrounded her; while her lonely rambles abroad taught her much that your thorough-faced pedagogue utterly ignores.

"Her slate did not always present the sums in addition duly set, which it ought. The stiff, tallowed locks and long-nosed visages of the serious matter-of-fact young men, intently poring over their Virgils and Latin grammars, on the opposite side of the room, were oftener transferred by her pencil to its surface. She could no more keep from drawing a striking or peculiar set of features, than she could stop her heart's beating; but she had no thought of giving pain, and was unwilling to have her pictures seen. Sometimes a mischievous companion, possessing herself of one, would display it. If the unfortunate subject had the happy faculty of taking a joke, he passed it off with a laugh. But

a matter-of-fact, shy, sensitive youth regarded Miriam afterward with insuperable dread. We well remember one who, finding himself graphically set forth with the quiet imaginary addition of a parasol over his head, and bows, with floating ends on his coat skirts, left school in dismay and did not again attend.

"Her copy-book presented an appearance very unlike those of her school-mates. She followed no formally set copy, but wrote little poems which had struck her fancy in reading, interspersed with an occasional verse of her own, the margins being adorned with heads and various devices, something after the ancient fashion, modernly revived, of embellishing books.

"In the art of drawing *she never had a master*, the only instruction she received being a few hints from a relative gifted with a like talent. The itinerant professors of painting and kindred accomplishments who stopped at times, in her native village, were incapable of improving such an endowment as hers. Their *chefs-d'œuvres* on velvet, their red and green birds, and extraordinary 'flower-pieces' done by theorems, their impossible Scripture scenes, gave her infinite amusement. She should have studied with a true artist, but no such opportunity presented itself—a subject of deep regret to her in after years, as therein she believed the proper development of her powers could have been found."

Such was the erratic training and chance development of rare—indeed almost unprecedented—original talent; for what humorist has ever so clearly illustrated his own sketches of life and character. The very expression of the

Widow's nose and the Elder's spectacles, are a promise to the mirth-loving reader of good things at hand; and we leave them with the assurance that the promise will more than be fulfilled.

A. B. N.

WIDOW BEDOTT PAPERS.

I.

Jezekiah Bedott.

HE was a wonderful hand to moralize, husband was, 'specially after he begun to enjoy poor health. He made an observation once when he was in one of his poor turns, that I never shall forget the longest day I live. He says to me one winter evenin' as we was a settin' by the fire, I was a knittin' (I was always a wonderful great knitter) and he was a smokin' (he was a master hand to smoke, though the doctor used to tell him he 'd be better off to let tobacker alone; when he was well, used to take his pipe and smoke a spell after he 'd got the chores done up, and when he wa'n't well, used to smoke the biggest part o' the time). Well, he took his pipe out of his mouth and turned toward me, and I knowed something was comin', for he had a pertikkeler way of lookin' round when he was gwine to say any thing oncommon. Well, he says to me, says he, "Silly,"

(my name was Prissilly naterally, but he ginerally called me "Silly," cause 'twas handier, you know.) Well, he says to me, says he, "Silly," and he looked pretty sollem, I tell you, he had a sollem countenance naterally—and after he got to be deacon 'twas more so, but since he 'd lost his health he looked sollemer than ever, and certingly you wouldent wonder at it if you knowed how much he underwent. He was troubled with a wonderful pain in his chest, and amazin' weakness in the spine of his back, besides the pleurissy in the side, and having the ager a considerable part of the time, and bein' broke of his rest o' nights 'cause he was so put to 't for breath when he laid down. Why its an onaccountable fact that when that man died he hadent seen a well day in fifteen year, though when he was married and for five or six year after I shouldent desire to see a ruggeder men than what he was. But the time I 'm speakin' of he'd been out o' health nigh upon ten year, and O dear sakes! how he had altered since the first time I even see him! That was to a quiltin' to Squire Smith's a spell afore Sally was married. I 'd no idee then that Sal Smith was a gwine to be married to Sam Pendergrass. Se 'd ben keepin' company with Mose Hewlitt, for better 'n a year, and every body said *that* was a settled thing, and lo and behold! all of a sudding she up and took Sam Pendergrass. Well, that was the first time I ever see my husband, and if any body 'd

a told me then that I should ever marry him, I should a said—but lawful sakes! I most forgot, I was gwine to tell you what he said to me that evenin', and when a body begins to tell a thing I believe in finishin' on 't some time or other. Some folks have a way of talkin' round and round and round for evermore, and never comin' to the pint. Now there's Miss Jinkins, she that was Poll Bingham afore she was married, she is the tejusest individooal to tell a story that ever I see in all my born days. But I was a gwine to tell you what husband said. He says to me says he, "Silly," says I, "What?" I dident say "What, Hezekier?" for I dident like his name. The first time I ever heard it I near killed myself a laffin. "Hezekier Bedott," says I, "well, I would give up if I had sich a name," but then you know I had no more idee o' marryin' the feller than you have this minnit o' marryin' the governor. I s'pose you think it's curus we should a named our oldest son Hezekier. Well, we done it to please father and mother Bedott, it's father Bedott's name, and he and mother Bedott both used to think that names had ought to go down from gineration to gineration. But we always called him Kier, you know. Speakin' o' Kier, he *is* a blessin', ain't he? and I ain't the only one that thinks so, I guess. Now don't you never tell nobody that I said so, but between you and me I rather guess that if Kezier Winkle thinks she is a gwine to ketch Kier

Bedott she is a *leetle* out of her reckonin'. But I was going to tell what husband said. He says to me, says he, "Silly," I says, says I, "What?" If I dident say "what" when he said "Silly," he 'd a kept on saying "Silly," from time to eternity. He always did, because, you know, he wanted me to pay pertikkeler attention, and I ginerally did; no woman was ever more attentive to her husband than what I was. Well, he says to me, says he, "Silly." Says I, "What?" though I 'd no idee what he was gwine to say, dident know but what 'twas something about his sufferings, though he wa'n't apt to complain, but he frequently used to remark that he wouldent wish his worst enemy to suffer one minnit as he did all the time, but that can't be called grumblin'—think it can? Why, I've seen him in sitivations when you 'd a thought no mortal could a helped grumblin', but *he* dident. He and me went once in the dead o' winter in a one hoss slay out to Boonville to see a sister o' hisen. You know the snow is amazin' deep in that section o' the kentry. Well, the hoss got stuck in one o' them are flambergasted snow-banks, and there we sot, onable to stir, and to cap all, while we was a sittin' there, husband was took with a dretful crick in his back. Now *that* was what I call a *perdickerment*, don't you? Most men would a swore, but husband dident. He only said, says he, "Consarn it." How did we get out, did you ask? Why we might a been

Says he to me, says he, "Silly." I says to him, says I, "what?" He says to me, says he, "we'er all poor critters!"—PAGE 25.

sittin' there to this day fur as *I* know, if there hadent a happened to come along a mess o' men in a double team and they hysted us out. But I was gwine to tell you that observation o' hisen. Says he to me, says he, "Silly." (I could see by the light o' the fire, there dident happen to be no candle burnin', if I don't disremember, though my memory is sometimes ruther forgitful, but I know we wa'n't apt to burn candles exceptin' when we had company) I could see by the light of the fire that his mind was oncommon solemnized. Says he to me, says he, "Silly." I says to him, says I, "What?" He says to me, says he, "*We're all poor critters!*"

II.

The Widow Essays Poetry.

YES—he was one o' the best men that ever trod shoe-leather husband was, though Miss Jinkins says (she 'twas Poll Bingham) *she* says, I never found it out till after he died, but that 's the consarndest lie that ever was told, though it's jest of a piece with every thing else she says about me. I guess if every body could see the poitry I writ to his memory, nobody wouldent think I dident set store by him. Want to hear it? Well, I' ll see if I can say it; it ginerally affects me wonderfully, seems to harrer up my feelins; but I' ll try. Dident know I ever writ poetry? how you talk! used to make lots on 't; haint so much late years. I remember once when Parson Potter had a bee, I sent him an amazin' great cheese, and writ a piece o' poitry and pasted on top on 't. It says:

> Teach him for to proclaim
> Salvation to the folks,
> No occasion give for any blame
> Nor wicked people's jokes.

And so it goes on, but I guess I won't stop to say the rest on 't now, seein' there 's seven and forty verses.

Parson Potter and his wife were wonderfully pleased with it, used to sing it to the tune o' Haddam.—Page 27.

Parson Potter and his wife was wonderfully pleased with it, used to sing it to the tune o' Haddem. But I was gwine to tell the one I made in relation to husband, it begins as follers:

He never jawed in all his life,
He never was onkind—
And (tho' I say it that was his wife)
Such men you seldom find.

(That 's as true as the Scripturs, I never knowed him to say a harsh word.)

I never changed my single lot—
I thought 't would be a sin—

(though widder Jinkins says it 's because I never had a chance.) Now 't ain't for me to say whether I ever had a numerous number o' chances or not, but there 's them livin' that *might* tell if they was a mind to; why, this poitry was writ on account of being joked about Major Coon, three year after husband died. I guess the generality o' folks knows what was the nature o' Major Coon's feelins toward me, tho' his wife and Miss Jinkins *does* say I tried to ketch him. The fact is, Miss Coon feels wonderfully cut up 'cause she knows the Major took her "Jack at a pinch"—seein' he couldent get such as he wanted, he took such as he could get—but I goes on to say—

I never changed my single lot—
I thought 't would be a sin—
For I thought so much o' Deacon Bedott
I never got married agin.

If ever a hasty word he spoke
His anger didert last,
But vanished like tobacker smoke
Afore the wint'ry blast.

And since it was my lot to be
The wife of such a man,
I tell the men that's after me
To ketch me if they can.

If I was sick a single jot
He called the doctor in—

That's a fact—he used to be scairt to death if any thing ailed me, now only jest think—widder Jinkins told Sam Pendergrasses wife (she 't was Sally Smith) that she guessed the deacon dident set no great store by me, or he wouldent a went off to confrence meetin' when I was down with the fever. The truth is, they couldent git along without him no way. Parson Potter seldom went to confrence meetin', and when he wa'n't there, who was ther, pray tell, that knowed enough to take the lead if husband dident do it? Deacon Kenipe hadent no gift, and Deacon Crosby hadent no inclination, and so it all come on to Deacon Bedott—and he was always ready and willin' to do his duty, you know; as long as he was able to stand on his legs he continued to go to confrence meetin; why, I've knowed that man to go when he couldent scarcely crawl on account o' the pain in the spine of his back. He had a wonderful gift, and he wa'n't a man to keep his talents hid up in a napkin—so you see 't was from a sense o' duty he went when I was

sick, whatever Miss Jinkins may say to the contrary But where was I? O—

If I was sick a single jot
He called the doctor in—
I sot so much store by Deacon Bedott
I never got married agin.

A wonderful tender heart he had
That felt for all mankind—
It made him feel amazin' bad
To see the world so blind.

Whiskey and rum he tasted not—

That's as true as the Scripturs—but if you'll believe it, Betsy, Ann Kenipe told my Melissy that Miss Jinkins said one day to their house how't she'd seen Deacon Bedott high, time and agin! did you ever! Well, I'm glad nobody don't pretend to mind any thing *she* says. I've knowed Poll Bingham from a gal, and she never knowed how to speak the truth—besides she always had a pertikkeler spite against husband and me, and between us tew, I'll tell you why if you won't mention it, for I make it a pint never to say nothin' to injure nobody. Well, she was a ravin-distracted after my husband herself, but it's a long story, I'll tell you about it some other time, and then you'll know why widder Jinkins is etarnally runnin' me down. See—where had I got to? O, I remember now—

Whiskey and rum he tasted not—
He thought it was a sin—
I thought so much o' Deacon Bedott
I never got married agin.

But now he 's dead ! the thought is killin'
My grief I can't control—
He never left a single shillin
His widder to console.

But that wa'n't his fault—he was so out o' health for a number o' year afore he died, it ain't to be wondered at he dident lay up nothin'—however it dident give him no great oneasiness—he never cared much for airthly riches, though Miss Pendergrass says she heard Miss Jinkins say Deacon Bedott was as tight as the skin on his back—begrudged folks their vittals when they came to his house! did you ever! why he was the hull-souldest man I ever see in all my born days. If I'd such a husband as Bill Jinkins was I'd hold my tongue about my neighbors' husbands. He was a dretful mean man, used to git drunk every day of his life—and he had an awful high temper—used to swear like all possest when he got mad—and I've heard my husband say—(and he wa'n't a man that ever said any thing that wa'n't true)—I've heard *him* say Bill Jinkins would cheat his own father out of his eye teeth if he had a chance. Where was I? O! "His widder to console"—ther ain't but one more verse, 't ain't a very lengthy poim. When Parson Potter read it, he says to me, says he—"What did you stop so soon for?"—but Miss Jinkins told the Crosby's *she* thought I'd better a stopt afore I'd begun —she 's a purty critter to talk so, I must say. I'd like to see some poitry o' hern—I guess it would be

astonishin' stuff; and mor 'n all that, she said there wa'n't a word o' truth in the hull on 't—said I never cared tuppence for the deacon. What an everlastin' lie!! Why—when he died, I took it so hard I went deranged, and took on so for a spell they was afraid they should have to send me to a Lunattic Arsenal. But that 's a painful subject, I won't dwell on 't. I conclude as follows:

I 'll never change my single lot—
I think 't would be a sin—
The inconsolable widder o' Deacon Bedott,
Don't intend to get married agin.

Excuse my cryin'—my feelins always overcomes me so when I say that poitry—O-o-o-o-o-o!

III.

Widow Jenkins' Animosity.

O, YES I remember I promised to tell you the cause o' widder Jinkinses ennimosity to me—Molissy, pass the bread—well, you see, Deacon Bedott (he wa'n't deacon then though) he come—help yerself to butter, dew—he come to Wiggletown to teach the deestriet school. He was origginally from the Black River kentry. His father was a forehanded farmer, and he 'd give Hezekier a complete eddication—he took to larnin' naterally. Is your tea agreeable? I s'pose ther wa'n't his equil for cypherin' no wher round. Well, Squire Smith he was out in them parts, and he got acquainted with Hezekier, and he see that he was an oncommon capable young man, and so he conduced him to come to Wiggletown and teach school. Kier, pass the cheeze to Miss Piggins. Don't never eat cheeze! dew tell! well, *husband* couldent eat cheeze without impunity durin' the last years of his life—used to say that it lay like a stun on his stomick; as sure as he eat a piece o' cheeze for his supper, he 'd lay awake groanin' all night, if he dident take some

kind of an antigote to pervent it. But I was gwine to tell—Well, the day after he come to our place, Squire Smith's folks had a quiltin' —I was there—'t wa'n't long afore Sally was married (she 'tis Sam Pendergrasses wife)—she was a makin' her quilts—though 'twas ginerally thought she was engaged to Mose Hewlet, and as to that matter, it's my opinion she might better a had him than the one she *did* have. I never thought Sam Pendergrass was much—none o' the Pendergrasses ain't no great shakes, though he 's good enough for Sal Smith. Melissy, why don't you sarve out the sass? That sass ain't fust-rate—you see, while 't was a dewin' Loviney Skinner, she come in with that are subscription paper, to git up a society for "the univarsal diffusion of elevation among the colored poperlation," and while I was lookin' at it to see who 'd signed and how much they gi'n, the sass got overdid. But I was gwine to tell about that quiltin'. Ther was a number o' young folks there—see—there was Prissilly Poole (that 's me), Poll Bingham (Bill Jinkinses widder), Huddy Hewlit (she married Nat Farntash and both on 'em died to the westard a number o' years ago), and Sally Smith (Sam Pendergrasses wife), and the Peabodys (Jerushy married Shadrack Dany—but Betsey ain't married yet, though I s'pose if ever any body tried faithfully to git a husband Bets' Peabody has), and Nab Hinksten (she 'tis Major Coon's wife now).

though then she wa'n't nothin' but a milliner's apprintice. I remember, I wondered at the Smiths for invitin' her, but they never was pertikkeler who they went with, and she always had a wonderful way o' crowdin' in. See—you heerd, dident you, how 't she said I tried to ketch the Major, but he lookt ruther higher 'n to marry widder Bedott? He must a lookt consarn-ed high when he took Nab Hinksten! She 's a purty critter to be a tryin' to disperse my character, I dew say! I'll let her know 't Deacon Bedott's widder ain't a gwine to be put down by the like o' her. What was she, pray tell, in her young days? I make it a pint never to say nothin' against nobody—but truth ain't no slander, think it is? and all creation knows she wa'n't nobody. Why her father was a poor drunken shack away down in Bottletown, and her mother took in washin', and Nab Hinksten herself worked out for a half a dollar a week, till Miss Potter was down there one time a visitin' Parson Potter's relations, and she took pity on her and fetched her up to Wiggletown to live with her; but after a spell she got above dewin' housework and went into Miss Dickerson's milliner shop, and there she stayed till Zeb Hawkins married her, and after he died o' delirreum trimmins, she sot tew to ketch somebody else, and at last she draw'd in Major Coon—he 'd been disappinted ('t ain't for me to say who disappinted him) and so he dident care much who he married and now she 's

Miss Major Coon! O, deary me, it's enough to make a body sick to see the airs she puts on. Did you see her come kippin' into meetin' last Sabber day with that are great long ostridge feather in her bunnit, and a shawl as big as a bed kiver? But I could put up with her if she wouldent slander her betters. She and Miss Jinkins is wonderful intimit now, though I remember when Poll Bingham hild her head high enough above Nab Hinksten, at that quiltin' she dident scarcely speak to her. Is your cup out? Take some more bread—not no more? why you don't eat nothing—I'm afeard you won't make out a supper—well dew take a piece o' the sweetcake—I ain't sure about it bein' good, Melissy made it and she's apt to git in a leetle tew much molasses—but them nutcakes *I know* is good, for I made 'em myself, and I dew think I make nutcakes *about* as good as any body else. Kier's a wonderful favoryte o' nutcakes, ain't you Kier? but his father couldent eat 'em at all for a number o' year afore he died—they were tew rich for his stomick—jest as sure as he eat a nutcake he used to have a sick spell afterward. But I was a gwine to tell how Poll Bingham come to take such a spite against me—well, the beginnin' on't commenced at that are quiltin'. In the evenin' you see the young men come. There was Hezekier Bedott—Zeb Hawkins (he 't was Miss Coon's fust husband, he got to be a worthless critter afore he died), and Shubal Green

(he was a wonderful good singer, had an amazin' powerful voice, used to sing in meetin' and nigh about raise the ruff o' the meetin'-house off), and Zophar Slocum—he was studyin' to be a doctor, he was a smart young man but dretful humbly: he used to write the poitry for the "Wiggleton Banner." He got dretfully in love with a young woman once, and she dident recipperate his feelins—'t ain't for me to tell who the young woman was. I don't approve o' tellin' such things—well, he got into such a takin' on account o' her coldness, that at last he writ her a letter tellin' of her how 't he couldent stan such undifference no longer, and if she continood to use him so, he was determined to commit self-suiside—at the end o' the letter, he put in a varse o' poitry—it says—

O, 'tis a dretful thing to be
In such distress and miseree!
I'm eny most a natteral fool
All on account o' Silly Poole!

There! I've let on who 'twas—hain't I? but he altered his mind about killin' himself, and was married about three months after to Sophier Jones. Take another nut-cake—dew. Why, what a small eater you be! I'm afeared the vittals don't suit you. Well, less see who else was there. O, Tim Crane. He was a wonderful *saftly* feller—dident scarsely know enough to go in when it rained, though he was purty sharp at makin' money. He married Trypheny

Kenipe, Deacon Kenipe's sister—they went to the westard, and I've heered they'd got to be quite rich. I guess it must be owin' to Miss Crane's scrapin' and savin', for she was the stingiest of all created critters. What did you say, Kier? Jim Crane comin' back here to live? Well, 't won't be no great addition to Wiggletown, for they ain't——What! Kier Bedott? Miss Crane dead! Land o' liberty! what an awful thing! Dear me! I dew feel amazin' sorry for Mr. Crane! how onfortinate! to lose his wife! such a nice woman as she was, tew! What did you say, Melissy Bedott! How 't I jest called Miss Crane a stingy critter? you must a misunderstood me a purpose! I said she was an oncommon equinomical woman. I always thought a master sight of Miss Crane, though I must say she wa'n't quite good enough for such a man as Timothy Crane. He 's an amazin' fine man. I said he dident know nothing? Kier Bedott, how you *dew* misunderstand. I meant that he was a wonderful unoffensive man, well-disposed toward every body. Well, I 'm glad Mr. Crane 's a comin' back here; should think '*t would* be melancholy to stay there after buryin' his pardner. His poor motherless darters, tew! I feel for *them*. It 's a dretful thing for galls to be left without a mother! Melissy, what be you winkin' to Kier for? Don't you know it 's very unproper to wink? Kier, did Deacon Kenipe say what complaint Miss Crane died of? The

eperdemic! how you talk! that's a turrible disease: I remember it prevailed in our place when I was quite young—a number o' individuals died on't I don't wonder Mr. Crane wants to git away from the westard, it must be very onpleasant to stay to a place where his companion was tore away from him by such an aggravatin' complaint as the eperdemic. Won't you be helped to nothing more?—O, sure enough—I was goin' to tell how Poll Bingham came to be such an inimy o' mine—now I should n't wonder if she should set tew and try tew ketch Mr. Crane when he comes back, should you? I'll bet forty great apples she 'll dew it, she 's been ravin' distracted to git married ever since she was a widder, but I ruther guess Timothy Crane ain't a man to be took in by such a great fat, humbly, slanderin' old butter tub. She 's as gray as a rat, tew, that are hair o' hern 's false. I'm gray tew. I guess you haint told no news now, Melissy Bedott. I know I'm *ruther* gray, but it's owin' to sickness and trouble. I had n't a gray hair in my head when yer par died. I ain't as old as widder Jinkins, by a number o' year. I think 't would be a good idear for some friendly person to warn Mr. Crane aginst Poll Jinkins as soon as he gits here, don't you? I *dew* feel for Mr. Crane. Kier, I wish you 'd invite him to step in when you see him, I want to convarse with him. I feel to sympathize with him in his afflictive dispensation. I know what 'tis to lose a pardner.

IV.

Mr. Crane Walks In.

WALK in! Why Mr. Crane how dew you dew? I'm despot glad to see you—amazin' glad. Kier told me you 'd arriv' several days ago, and I've been suspectin' you in every day sence. Take a cheer and set down—dew—Why Mr. Crane, you hold yer own wonderfully, don't grow old a speck as I see. Think I've altered much? Don't, hay? Well, Mr. Craue, we've both on us had trouble enough to make us look old. Excuse my cryin', Mr. Crane. I've ben dretfully exercised ever sence I heerd o' your affliction. O! Mr. Crane! what poor short-sighted critters we be! can't calkilate with any degree o' sartinty what's a gwine to happen. Parson Potter used to say 't was well we did n't know the futur, cause 't would have an attendency to onfit us for dewin' our duty; and so 't would—if you and I 'd a knowed when you went away fifteen year ago, what we 'd got to undergo, 't would a nigh about killed us, would n't it? O! Mr. Crane! Mr. Crane! Creation has dealt purty hard with us sence we parted! Then, you had

a wife—an uncommon likely woman she was tew—and I was blest with one o' the best o' men for a husband—now, I'm a widder, and you're a wid dyiver. But our loss is their gain—at least I'm sartin my loss is Deacon Bedott's gain. O! Mr. Crane, how that man did suffer for a number o' year afore he died; but he was the resignedest critter I ever *did* see—never grumbled a grain. Parson Potter used to say 't was to eddification to come to see him, and hear him converse. He felt wonderful bad about your bein' gone to the westard, Mr. Crane. He used to frequently remark, that he'd giv more to see Mr. Crane than ary individdyival he knowed on. He sot a great deal by you—and so did I by Miss Crane. We both on us felt as if we could n't be reconciled to your livin away off there—it seemed as if we could n't *have* it so no way. It's a dretful pity you went there, Mr. Crane. Mabby if you had n't a went, yer pardner would n't a died—but what's did can't be ondid, it's all for the best. I was turribly overcome when I heerd o' her death—fainted away, and 't was quite a spell afore I come tew. That's a bad clymit, Mr. Crane—it *must* be a bad clymit, or the eperdemic, and fever ager would n't prevail so there. A few year afor husband died, *he* had quite a notion to go to the westard. He heerd how well you was a dewin'—and then there was Samson Bedott, his cousin (he married Hepsy Gifford, you know), *he* went some where to the west-

ard--and after he'd ben there a spell, he writ my husband a leuter, urgin' of him to come out there, he said to be sure the clymit was ruther tryin' at fust—but then after you'd got used to 't, you'd be ruggeder 'n ever you was afore—and it was such a wonderful kentry for agricultifer to grow—said 't wa'n't nigh so mountanious as the eastard—the yomandery didn't have to labor no wher nigh so hard as what they did here—just plant your perduce and that was the eend on 't—'t would take care of itself till 't was time to git it in. Well, husband was quite fierce to go—and if it had n't a ben for me, he *would* a went, but I would n't hear to 't at all. I says to him, says I, "'T wont dew for you to go there, no how—Samson, himself, owns it's a tryin' clymit--and if it's tryin' for well hearty folks, how do you 'spose *you'd* stan' it? you enjoy poor enough health here, and if you was to go there you'd enjoy woss yet, what's agricultifer compared to health?" I was a great deal more consarned for husband than what I was for myself, Mr. Crane—be sure it's a woman's duty to feel so, but seems to me I felt it oncommonly. And no wonder, for my husband *was* a treshur. O! Mr. Crane, when I lost *him* I lost *all*. And that's what makes me feel to sympathize with you as I dew, Mr. Crane. Our sittywations are so much alike. I 'spose you feel as if your loss could n't never be made up to you, don't you? That's jest how I felt. Now there's Major Coon, and Mr.

Gifford, and Squire Perce, and Cappen Canoot, and old uncle Dawson (he 's old but he 's quite rich), why, nary one o' them would n't a filled Deacon Bedott's place to me. 'T ain't for me to say they 've all wanted me—ahem—but s'posen they should, you know. Whenever my friends begin to talk to me about changin' my condition, I always tell 'em it 's a *resk*—and so 'tis Mr. Crane—it 's a turrible resk to take a second pardner—without its an individdyival you know 'd when you was young—*that* makes a difference —'t ain't so resky *then*. But after all, Mr. Crane—it 's a tryin' thing to be without a companion—ain't it? And then there 's the responsibilitude and bringing up the children—widders complains most o' that. But there 's a wonderful difference in folks about that. Now 't wa'n't no great chore for me to bring up my children. Parson Potter's wife fraquently used to say (she had quite a large family, you know), she used to say to me, "Miss Bedott I 'd giv eny, most eny thing if I had such a faculty for managin' children as you 've got, and for dewin' as well by 'em as what you do." Ther *is* an amazin' difference in wimmin—now ther 's the widder Jinkins—she 't was Poll Bingham—see—you knowd Poll Bingham when she was a gal, did n't you? Very nice gal did you say!!! Why Mr. Crane, how forgetful your memory is! But I don't know as she was so much woss than *some* other gals I 've knowd. A body can't tell what sort of a

woman a gal *will* make afore she 's married—they don't always show out, you know. But I make it a pint never to say nothing against nobody—and I am sure I don't wish Miss Jinkins no harm—for all she 's did so much to injure me. I was only gwine to speak o' her way o' bringin' up her children. 'Tis astonishin' how that critter has managed with them young ones! She 's the miserablest hand I ever did see in all my born days. Why them little plagues was in the streets from mornin' till night—Bill and Sam a swearin' and throwin' stuns—and Alviry a racin' and rompin' and botherin' the neighbors. They 've got bigger now and ain't quite so troublesome, though they 're bad enough yet—but that ain't to be wondered at—for Miss Jinkins has so much gaddin' to dew she hain't no time to tend to her family. But if that was all ther was against her 't would n't be so bad. However—I don't want to talk about her—truth ain't to be spoken at all times you know—but I *will* say I should pity any *decent* man that got her for a wife—'specially if he had children. Speakin' o' children—you must feel Miss Crane's loss dretfully in takin' care o' yourn. It 's an awful task for a man to manage gals, Mr. Crane—and you 've got four on 'em—Mirandy and Seliny is purty well growd up—but then them tew little ones—see—what 's ther names? O, yes—Liddy and Sary Ann. What purty little critters they be though I noticed them in meetin' a Sabber-

day—O Mr. Crane! when I looked at them poor little darlin's—a settin' there all in mournin'—and thought about their motherless sittywation—I felt as if I should a bust right out a cryin'! I had to hold my handkerchief afore my face. O Mr. Crane! I dew feel for them children! It's so onfortinate to be left without a mother!—jest at their age tew—when they have so much vivacitude and animosity, and need a mother's care for to train 'em rightly. O Mr. Crane! it's turrible! turrible! What would Melissy a did if it had a ben me that died instid of her par? She wa'n't but ten year old, just about the age o' them little cherubims o' yourn. My husband was an oncommon gifted man—and a wonderful kind father—but he would n't a did by Melissy as I have—he would n't a knowed how to expend her mind and devilup her understandin' as I have—but I've got a natteral tack. Melissy 's a credit to me, Mr. Crane—tho' it 's me that says so, she 's eny most as good a housekeeper as what I be, but 't ain't for me to boast—I've been indefategable in train' of her. I 'm sorry she hain't to hum to-night—she and Kier 's gone to singin' school. Yes—it 's an onfortinate thing for gals to be left without a mother. It was dretful Miss Crane 's bein' took away—so sudding tew—I feel so distrest about your moloncolly sittywation I can't scarcely sleep o' nights. I've jest begun a piece o' poitry describin' you feelins. I'll read you what I've

got writ if you 're a mind to hear it, tho' it ain't only jest begun. I call it—

MR. CRANE'S LAMENTATIONS ON THE DEATH OF HIS COMPANION.

Trypheny Crane! Trypheny Crane!
And sban't we never meet no more?
My buzzom heaves with turrible pain
While I thy ontimely loss deplore.

I used to fraquently grumble at my fate
And be afeerd I was a gwine to suffer sorrer—
But since you died my trouble is so great
I hain't got no occasion for to borrer.

The birds is singin' in the trees,
The flowers is blowin' on the plain,
But they hain't got no power to please
Without my dear Trypheny Crane.

I can't submit to 't though I must,
It is a dretful blow,
My heart is ready for to bust—
I shall give up I know.

And though ondoubtedly my loss
Is my dear pardner's gain,
I can't be reconciled, because
I've lost my Trypheny Crane.

When I git all writ I'll giv it to you if you want it. I calkilate to have it considerable longer—I always aim to have my poims long enough to pay folks for the trouble o' readin of 'em. What! must you go? Well dew come in agin—come often—I've been quite gratified hearin of you talk—you 've been away so long. Now dew be neighborly—and dew tell Mi

randy and Seliny to come and see Melissy—and Liddy and Sary Ann—dew let them come over. I'm very fond o' children—very indeed—and I feel so much for them are tew dear little motherless critters. Well—good night, Mr. Crane!

V.

The Widow Discourses of Pumpkins.

GOOD evenin', Betsy—(Mr. Crane's "help.")—Is Mr. Crane to hum? Is he in the kitchen? in the settin' room, hey? Ain't very well? why how you talk! Well, I want to see him a minnit, but I guess I'll jest step in the kitchin fust and dry my feet. I 'd no idee 'twas so sloppy or I 'd a wore my overshoes—seems to me you 're got yer kitchen heated up wonderful hot—O, stewin yer punkin, hey? I 've been makin some pies to-day, tew. You must have a purty hard time here, Betsy. Mr. Crane 's a fine man, a *very* fine man—a very fine man, *indeed*—but 'tain't as if he had a wife—*now* every thing comes on his *help*, you see—the gals is nice gals—amazin' nice gals but they hain't no experience—never had no care you know—and 'tain't natral to s'pose they could take right hold and *dew*, as soon as ther mar died. But it sems ruther hard to see so much come onto a young gal like you. On *your* account I wish Mr. Crane had a wife, 't would be so much easier for you—that is if he got a good experienced woman o' biziness—that

had brung up a family of her own—don't you think so?—Well, my feet's got purty well dry—I guess I'll step into the settin' room and see Mr. Crane—I've got an arrant tew him. How d' you dew, Mr. Crane? I'm dretful sorry to hear you ain't well, I wa'n't a comin' in—but Betsy said you was undisposed—and I was unwillin' to make you egspose yerself by comin' to the door—so I thought I 'd jest step in where you was—hope I don't intrude—I jest run over to fetch that are poitry I've ben writen for you—I would a gin it to yer darters—they called in for Melissy to go to singin' school—but I was afeard they'd lose it afore they got hum—young gals is kerless, you know. Here 'tis—'tain't so long as I meant to have, arter all—only nine and forty varses—but I 've had company—sister Magwire (she 'twas Melissy Poole, you know—my youngest sister, the one my Melissy was named arter) she's ben to see me, and stayed a week, and when a body has company it kind o' flustrates a body's idees, you know. And then, tew, sister Magwire don't take no interest in no such thing. She 's a very clever woman, Melissy is, but she ain't a bit like me—hain't no genyus—no more hain't sister Harrinton—why they don't nary one on 'em take no more sense o' poitry than that are stove. If I had a let on to sister Magwire what I was a writin', she 'd a tried to stop me—had to work at it o' nights arter she d went to bed—and that 's the reason why I hain't finished it afore.

Sister Magwire's a smart woman, tew in *her way*—but it 's a different kind o' smart from mine. I think her bein' married to such a man has exarted an onfavorable attendency on her. Mr. Magwire 's a stiddy, well-meanin' man—and has got along amazin' prosperous in the world—but he has dretful curus notions. Why, when I writ that affectin' allegory to the memory o' my husband, as true as I live, Mr. Crane, brother Magwire laffed about it right to my face!—said 'twas enough to make the deacon groan under ground—did you ever! I felt dretful hurt about it, but I never laid it up agin him, 'cause I know'd he dident know no better. But I dew feel wonderful consarned about yer health, Mr. Crane. What seems to be the matter with you? Pain in yer chist! O! that 's turrible!—it always scares me to death to hear of any body's havin' a pain in ther chist. Why that very thing was the beginnin' o' my husband's sickness, that finally terminated in his expiration. It ought to be tended tew right off, Mr. Crane, right off. When husband fust had it, 'twant very bad, and he dident pay no tention to 't—next time 'twas rother woss, and I wanted him to send for the doctor, but he wouldent—he was always amazinly opposed to physicianers. Well, the next time he was attacked 'twas dretful bad—he had to lay by—still all I could dew I couldent conduce him to have a doctor. Well it went on so for three days. I done all I could for him, but it

dident do a smite o' good—he kept a gittin' woss and woss, and the third day he was so distrest it *did* seem as if every breath he draw'd would be the death on him. Jest then old mother Pike come in—she was quite a doctor, you know—and she said he must take skoke berries and rum right off—ther wa'n't nothin' like it for pain in the chist—she always kep it in the house—so she goes right hum and fetches over a bottle on't and gin husband a wine glass full. She said he must begin with a purty stiff dose, 'cause he'd let it run on so long—arterward a gret spunful night and mornin' would be enough. Well, 'tis astonishin' how soon my husband experienced relief. Arter that he always took it as long as he lived, and I dew believe it alleviated his sufferings wonderfully—yes—I hain't a doubt but what if he'd a took it afore his disorder was seated, that man 'd a been alive and well to this day. But what's did can't be ondid—it's no use cryin' for spilt milk. Now, Mr. Crane, I dew beseech you, as a friend, to take skoke berries and rum afore it's tew late. Temperance man, hey? So be I tew; and you don't s'pose, dew you, Mr. Crane, that I'd advise you to take any thing that would intosticate you? I'd die afore I'd dew it. I think tew much of my repertation and yourn tew, to do such a thing. But it is the harmlessest stuff a body can take. You see the skoke berries counterects the alkyhall in the rum, and annyliates all its intosticatin' qualities. We jest put the rum on

to make it keep. You know skoke berries can't be got in the winter time, so if you want to presarve 'em for winters, you 've got to put some sort o' sperits tew 'em so 's they won't spyle. So don't you be none afeard to take it, Mr. Crane. I'll send you some when I go hum—I always keeps it on hand—and you be faithful and take a great spunful night and mornin'—and if you ain't the better for't afore long—then I'm out o' my calkilation—that's all. You must feel yer loss oncommonly when you ain't well, Mr. Crane. If ever a departed companion 's missed—seems to me it must be when the afflicted surviver's sick—'specially if its a *widiwer* that's lost his wife. How awful lonesome you *must* be here alone, when the children 's in bed and the gals has gun off—as I s'pose they fraquently dew when evenin' comes—and I don't blame them for't as I know on—its natural for young folks to like to *go*. How *dretful* lonesome you *must* be. Now *some* men wouldent mind it so much—they 'd go abroad and divart their minds—but *you* ain't a man to go to taverns and shops and such like places to begwile the time—*yur 're* a man that 's above such things, Mr. Crane—and that 's what makes it so aggrevative for you to be without a pardner. I went into the kitchen to dry my feet as I came in—and O, Mr. Crane! I never *did* experience such moloncolly sensations in my life as I did when I see how things went on there—'twas plain to be seen ther want no

head in the kitchenary departmont, and when 'taint well managed *there*—I tell you what, Mr. Crane—'t wont't be long afore it 'll be out o' kilter every where. Now Betsey Pringle's a clever enough gal fur as I know—but she's young and onstiddy, and wants lookin' tew every minit. She lived to Sam Pendergrasses a spell—and Miss Pendergrass told me how't Betsey could *dew*—but she wanted somebody to her heels t' overlook her all the time—she was such a kerless critter—said *she* couldent git along with her no way. Now if Sam Pendergrasses wife couldent stan' it with Betsey, it's a mystery to me how tew young gals like yourn is a gwine to git along with her. They hain't never had no care, and 't ain't to be suspected they should know how to manage—'t would be cruel to require it on 'em. It needs an experienced woman—and one that takes an *interest* in things, to keep house right. Ther was one thing hurt my feelins amazinly when I was in the kitchen—Betsey was a stewin' punkins for pies—I knowd in a minnit by the smell, that the critter was a burnin on't up. I dident say nothin—thought mabby she 'd be put out if I did, cause I ain't mistress here—but I couldent skercely hold in. I 'll be bound, Mr. Crane, you won't have a punkin pie fit t' eat all winter long—and it makes me feel bad to think on 't—for I make gret account o' punkins in winter time—don't you? Speakin o' punkins reminds me of a trick Miss Jinkins

sarved me once (she' t was Poll Bingham)—I never see a punkin without thinkin' on 't—and its tew good to keep—though I don't want to say nothin' to injure Miss Jinkins. 'T was tew year ago this fall—somehow or other our punkins dident dew well that year. Kier said he dident know whether the seed was poor, or what 'twas—any how, our punkins dident come to nothin' at all—had to make all my punkin pies out o' squashes—and *them* ain't no wher nigh as good as punkins. Well, one day I see Sam and Bill Jinkins go by with a load o' punkins—so I says to Millissy, says I, "I mean to jest run over and see if Miss Jinkins won't let me have one o' her punkins,"—the sight on 'em fairly makes my mouth water. So I throws on my shawl and goes over—though I very seldom axed any favors o' her—notwithstandin' she was etarnally borrerin' o' me—why ther want scarcely a day past but what she sent to borrer somethin or other—a loaf o' bread—or a drawin' o' tea—or a little molasses or a little sugar, or what not—and what 's more—she wa'nt wonderful partickler about payin'—and it's a sollem fact—the times that critter has had my bake pans and my flats and my wash board, ain't to be numbered. I make it a pint never to borrer when I can help it. Ther *is times* to be sure—when the best o' housekeepers is put to 't and obleged to ax favors o' ther nabors—but as for borrerin' every day—week in and week out, as the widder Jinkins does—ther ain't no need

on 't—but she can't stay to hum long enough to keep things in any kind o' decent order. But I was gwine to tell how she sarved me about the punkin. Well—I goes over—and I says, says I, "Miss Jinkins, I see you 're a gittin' in yer punkins—and I want to know whether or no you can't spare me one—ourn's failed, you know." "Well," says she, "we hain't got more 'n enough for our own use—but seein' it's *you*, I guess I *will* let you have one." So she went and fetched in one—quite a small one 't was. "What 's the price on 't says I (I dident s'pose she 'd tak any thing, for I 'd gin her a mess o' turnips a few days afore—but I thought I'd offer to pay). "What 's the price on 't?" says I. "O nothin' at all," says she. "Lawful sakes!" says I, "you don't s'pose I want to *beg* it, dew you? I meant to pay the money down." "You 'd look well," says she, "a payin' for 't—don't you s'pose I can afford to giv away a punkin?—purty story if I can't!" "Well," says I, "thank you a thousand times—you must come in to-morrer arter I git my pies made and help eat some." "Well, mabby I will," says she—so I takes my punkin and goes hum mighty pleased. Well, next day Melissy and me we cut up the punkin—'twas dretful small and wonderful thin—and when I come to stew it—my gracious! how it *did* stew away! The fact is 'twas a miserable *poor* punkin—good punkins don't stew down to nothin' so. Milessy she lookt into the pot and says she to me, says she,

'Granf'ther grievous! why mar I'm afeard this ere punkin's gwine to exasperate intirely, so ther won't be nun left on't." Well sure enough—arter 'twas sifted—as true as the world, Mr. Crane—ther want more'n a pint on't. "Why, mar," Milessy, says she—"'t wont make more'n *one* good sized pie." "Never you fear," says I—"I 'll bet forty gret apples I 'll git three pies out on 't any way." Some folks, you know, puts eggs in punkin pies, but accordin' to my way o' thinkin, tain't no addition. When I have plenty o' punkin I never use 'em—but Miss Jinkinses punkin turned out so small, I see I shouldent have nun to speak on without I put in eggs; so I takes my punkin and I stirs in my molasses, and my milk, and my eggs, and my spices, and I fills three of my biggest pie-pans. "There," says I to Melissy, "did n't I say I'd make three pies, and hain't I did it?" "Yes," says she, "but they're purty much all ingrejiences, and precious little punkin." Well, we got 'em in the oven, and jest as I was gwine to put in the last one, somebody knockt at the door. Melissy was a handin' on 't to me, and she was ruther startled, you know, when she heerd the knock, and she jerked away quite sudding, and spilt about half the pie out. I wiped it up as quick as I could, and Melissy she opened the door, and lo and behold! who should come in but the widder Jinkins! Arter she 'd sot a spell she says, says she, "Well, Miss Bedott, how did you make out with

yer pies?" "O, very well," says I. "I 'd jest got 'em in the oven when you come in." I thought, seein' she *gin* me the punkin, I wouldent say nothin' about its bein' such a miserable one. Mustent find fault in a gift hosses mouth, you know. Well, when my pies was done I takes 'em and sets 'em on the table.—"Them *looks* nice," says the widder, says she. "They *be* nice," says I. I knowed they was nice, for they had every thing in 'em to *make* 'em nice. So I took the thin one that Melissy spilt over, and sot it in the buttry winder to cool, so 's to give Miss Jinkins a piece. I took *that* cause I knowd 't would cool sooner'n t' others, on account of its bein' thinner. Well, when my pie was cool, I fetcht it out and sot it afore Miss Jinkins, and I gin her a knife and a fork, and says I, "Now help yerself, Miss Jinkins," and I tell you, the way she helpt herself was a caution. Melissy lookt as if she was ready to burst out laffin; I was raly afeard she would. Arter she 'd put in about half the pie, she laid down her knife and fork, and says she, "This ere pie ain't cool enough yet accordin' to *my* way of thinkin'—I never *did* fancy warm punkin pies." So she riz up to go. "O don't go, Miss Jinkins," says I, "dew wait a spell and I'll set it out door—it 'll cool there in a few minnits—you gin me the punkin and I want you should have yer share o' the pie." "Mercy on us!" says she, "I hope you don't spose I consider a punkin such a mighty gret gift—I was very glad off

a chance t' obleege you—but it 's time I was hum—I guess I won't mind about eaten any more o' that there pie—I never *did* fancy thin punkin pies—*these ere tew 'll be as much as I want.*" And jest as true as I live and breathe, the critter actilly took them tew pies and sot 'em crossways—one a top o' tother and marched off with 'em! When she got to the door she turned round, and says she—"Now Miss Bedott, whenever you want any little favor, such as a punkin or any thing else I've got that you hain't got—don't scruple to ask for 't—it always affords me the greatest gratification to dew a nabor a kindness." Arter she 'd gone, I lookt at Melissy and Melissy lookt at me in a perfect state o' dumfounderment! we was so bethunderstruck, 't was as much as five minnits I guess afore ary one of us spoke a word. At last says Melissy says she, "Did you ever!" "No, never! never!" says I, and then we sot up such a tremendous laff that Kier heerd us (he was to work out door), and he came in to see what was the matter, so I told him—and good gracious how he *did* roar! I tell you, he hain't never let me hear the last o' that punkin—I don't know to this day whether Miss Jinkins knowd I stewed up the hull o' the punkin to once or not—but I dew raly bleve if she had a knowd it, 't wouldent a made a speck o' difference about her taken the pies, for she was always the very squintessence o' meanness. Land o' liberty! Its nine o'clock—I 'd ought to ben hum an hour ago

Now, Mr. Crane, I dew hope you 'll take care o' yerself in season, and take my medicine—I'll send Kier over with it as soon as I get hum—and mind you take a gret spunful night and mornin' as long as you have any pain in yer chist—it 's a wonderful help to 't. And dew be kerful about egsposin yerself to the cold air—don't go out without rappin' up warm—remember the equinoxical storms is a comin' on soon, and them's dretful bad for invalidders. O Mr. Crane, 't would be an awful thing if you should be took away! I can't bear to think on't—excuse my cryin', Mr. Crane—I can't help it—I dew feel such an interest in yer family and—I hope you wont think I'm forrard, Mr. Crane—but I dew—I dew—I dew—set a great deal—by you, Mr. Crane.

VI.

The Widow Loses her Beau.

MELISSY! Melissy! Melissy Bedott! Why, what on arth 's come o' the critter! I'm sure she went up chamber a spell ago, to fix up, and I ain't seen her come down sence. You set down, gals, and I'll jest run up and see 'f she 's there. Why, Melissy, what in natur do you mean by keepin' me a yellin' all night? Did anser, hey? well, you 'd ought to leave yer door open so's a body could hear you, and not be obleeged to trot way up here arter you. Come down, right off. Seliny, and Mirandy Crane's down stairs—they want you to go to the Phreenyogical lectur with 'em. Ther par 's a gwine, but he 's bizzy and ain't ready yit, and he told 'em not to wait for him, 'cause it might be late afore he could git away. So they come arter us, 'cause they dident like to go alone. Me gwine? Why yes, to be sure—why shouldent I? I never heerd a phreenyogical lectur, and I 've got considerable curosty to see what 'tis. I 'll go put on my things. Melissy 'll be down in a minit. She insists on 't I shall go, tew, and I guess I

will—I always thought I should like to hear one o' them kind o' lecturs. (They enter the lecture room.) Less go back side, as fur away from the stove as we can git, it 's so awful hot here. What! you afeard o' the men folks, Mirandy? I don't care if 'tis right amongst the loafers and boys. I never see that man yit, nor boy nother, 't I was afeard on. Gracious sakes alive! dew look o' them dead folkses heads on the table! What awful looking things they be! Made o' plaster, hey? Well, I 'm glad on 't—shan't feel so dizgusted lookin' at 'em as I should if they was rael heads. What a curus lookin' critter that lecturer is, ain't he? How he has got his hair all scraped up! makes him look kind o' skairt. Name 's Mr. Vanderbump, ain't it? Wonder if that are woman without a bunnit on 's Miss Vanderbump? What an awful big head she 's got! *Her* forrid 's all bare, tew—how it sticks out! Sign of intellect? Goody grievous! I wouldent care for that. If I had such a humbly face I 'd keep it kivered up, wouldent you? Dew see! there comes Sam Pendergrasses wife, with that everlastin' boy o' hern. She takes that young one every where—and he always acts like Sanko. I guess she 'll find it purty warm there, right aside o' the stove. Look, Seliny! there 's Cappen Canoot—I 'll bet a cookey he called for me. Well, I 'm glad I 'd come away afore he 'd got there. I don't want none o' *his* company. I don't know what he expects to

gain by stickin' round me so. I hain't never gin him no incurridgement, and don't intend tew. Of all things! if there ain't Major Coon's wife, with that flambergasted old red hood o' hern on! Dew, for pity's sake, see how she sails along. And then, there comes the Major grinin' along behind her, as if she *was* the eend o' the law. I s'pose if ever a man was completely under his wife's thumb, Major Coon is. But they say he thinks she 's clear perfection; well, it 's well ther 's *somebody* thinks so. Kier was tellin' a speech old Green made about her t' other day. Old Green's a musical old critter, you know; well, he was in Smith's store, and Kier was there, and Major Coon, and a number of other men. The Major was a talkin' about his wife—you know how he 's forever talkin' about her—well, he was a praisin' on her up, tellin' how smart, and keen, and industrous she was, and all that. Byme by he went out, and says old Green, says he, "The Major *does* think his wife 's the very *dyvil, and so do I, tew.*" Old Green 'd no bizness to said it, but when Kier told on 't, I couldent help laffin'. Well done! If there ain't the widder Jinkins! I wonder if ever any thing goes on in Wiggletown without that woman's bein' on the spot! I never *did* see any body so beset to *go* as she is. If I was her I *would* stay to hum jest *once*, so 's to see how 't would seem—wouldent you?

There! Mr. Vanderbump is agwine to begin! (The

lecturer expatiates on the wonderful science of Phrenology.—gives a history of the various specimens—points out the organs, etc., etc., and just as he concludes this part of the performance, Mr. Crane enters.) Seliny—I *dew* begin to feel ruther timmorsome settin' here with all them rowdies behind us—don't you? If we had a gentleman with us I shouldent feel oneasy, should you? Ain't that yer par over yonder?—s'pose you go ax him to come and set here long with us—I should feel safer—[Selina goes and returns with her father, who sits down beside the widow.] Good evenin', Mr. Crane! I hope you won't take it amiss, my sendin' for you to come and set over here, for I raly felt as if I *should* fly away, with all those ere loafers right behind us—was afeard they 'd say something sassy tew us. And then, tew, I was expectin' every minit when old Canoot would be makin' a dive for this quarter—and I know'd he would n't if he see you here. O, Mr. Crane, you can't imagine how I dew dred that critter. I couldent bear the idee a' havin' on him go hum with me to-night—don't want t' incurridge him. How do you feel this evenin', Mr. Crane? better 'n you did, hey? well, I dew feel thankful for 't. Took them skoke berries and rum, did you? Well, that 's what helped you, depend on 't—but you mustent git slack about takin' on 't—stick tew it faithfully. Hadent you better take yer comforter off yer neck till you go out? you won't be so likely

to ketch cold. You 've got to be kerful—very kerful, Mr. Crane—you need somebody to see tew you all the time and *make* you kerful, the gals is young and thoughtless, and don't think on 't—but that ain' surprisin'. I 'm sorry you wa'n't here sooner, Mr. Crane. This 'ere phreenyology 's the curusest thing I ever *did* see. Did you ever see any thing to beat it—how he can tell an individiwal's character so egxactly by the looks o' their heads? don't seem to me as if it *could* be so—does it to you? I can't raclize I 've got such a numerous number of organs in my head—can you?—O, Mr. Crane; what a musical man you be! you 'll make me die a laffin! Seliny! jest hear what your par says. I axed him if he could raclize he had so many organs in his head—and he said how 't t' other day when he had such a turrible cold in it, it seemed is if there was organs, and fiddles, and drums. and every thing else in 't—did you ever?—I wish you 'd a ben here sooner, Mr. Crane, to hear Mr. Vanderbump's exparigate about them heads—he gin a de scription of the people they belonged tew—and told how ther characters was accordin' to ther heads That are big head—the one that runs up to such a peak on top—he says that 's Scott the celebrated author—I s'pose it 's the one that writ "Scott's Commontaries" on the Scripters. He says it 's a wonderful intillectible head: no doubt on 't—husband sot a gret deal by his Commontaries—used to borrer 'em o'

parson Potter—Mr. Scott must a' ben a smart man to write 'em. That are small curus shaped one on the corner—that 's the head of an underwitted critter that died in one o' the poor houses—hain't got no intellectible organs at all. That are skull that sets behind Mr. Scott—that 's Old Gibbs the pyrit, that was extecuted a number o' years ago—he was a turrible old villing. Mr. Vanderbump said that was old Gibb's skull positively *bony fidy*. That is—it 's giniwine bones—the rest on 'em's made o' plaster. But that are head that sets aside o' the commentater—the one that 's got such a danglin' under lip and flat forrid and runs out to such a pint behind—that 's old mother O'Killem, the Irish woman that murdered so many folks—she was an awful critter. He said 't wa'n't to be disputed though, that she 'd done a master sight o' good to mankind—he reckoned they ought to raise a moniment tew her—'cause any body that lookt at her head couldent persume no longer to doubt the truth o' phreenyology. He told us to obsarve the shape on 't perticlerly. You see the forrid 's dretful flat—well, that shows how 't the intellectible faculties is intirely wantin'. But he dident call it *forrid*. He called it the *hoss frontis*. I s'pose that 's 'cause its shaped more like a hoss than a human critter—animal propensitudes intirely predominates, you know. That 's what makes it stick out so on the back side—that 's the *hoss* hindis I s'pose—*hoss frontis* and *hoss hindis*, you

know. I felt oncomonly interested when he was a tellin' about her, 'cause I've read all about her in "Horrid Murders"—a book I've got—it's the interestinest book I 've read in all my life. It's enough to make yer hair stand on eend. I've ben over it I guess half a dozen times—and it seems interestiner every time. Husband got it of a pedlar the year aforc he died, and he used to take an amazin' deal o' comfort readin' on 't. Time and agin I've knowd that man to lie awake half the night arter he 'd ben readin' in "Horrid Murders." He was narvous, you know—I feel wonderfully attached to that book 'cause 't was such a favorite o' husband's. Every thing 't was dear to husband is dear to me—Mr. Crane—that 's one reason why I set store by you—*he* reckoned on you so much. I 'll lend you that book Mr. Crane—you 'll be delighted with it. You can jest step in with me when we go hum and I 'll let you take it. You 'll be amazinly pleased with the account o' Miss O'Killem. She murdered five husbands and a number of other individiwals, and it tells all how she killed each one on 'em. Some she cut ther throats and some she burnt, and some she chopped to pieces. O 'tis awful interestin'. What did you say, Mr. Crane? That gal with such red cheeks settin' right by the table, do you mean O, that is Kesier Winkle, she always contrives to get a seat where she 'll be seen. She takes quite a notion to Kier—but I guess she 'll miss a figger there. Kier

Bedott ain't a feller to be drawd in by a purty face—*he* wants something besides that—tho'. I never thought she was so wonderful handsome, do you—her cheeks is red to be sure, but every body can have *such* a col or if they want—you understand, hey! tho' tain't for me to say she paints, never standin' there is them that says so. I'm very glad Kier don't think o' havin' on her—I never did like the Winkles. Old Winkle 's a hard old case, and they *dew* say Kesier 's considerable like him.

There! I guess Miss Pendergrass has got roasted out—she 's a comin' this way with her admyrable boy—don't see what she wants to crowd in here for—should think she might find a seat somewhere else—shouldent you? (Mr. Crane relinquishes his seat to Mrs. Pendergrass and takes the one she left.) Good evenin', Miss Pendergrass! found yer sittivation rather warm, hey? Well—*I* make it a pint never to change my seat in meetins and lecturs and such places, when other folks is obleeged to change theirn t' accommerdate me. I think *I* can afford to be oncomfortable as well as other folks can—hope Mr. Crane won't ketch his death a cold when he goes out, on account o' brylin' and stewin' there by the stove—he ain't well at all. O don't git up, Miss Pendergrass—dew sit still now you 've got here. What a curus consarn this phreenyology is, ain't it? What an age of improvement we live in! If any body 'd a told us onco

how 't in a few year we 'd be able to tell egzackly what folks *was* by the shape o' ther heads—we wouldent a bleeved a word on 't—would we? You remember readin' about old mother O'Killem, in that are book I lent you, don't you? Well, he 's mistaken about one thing relatin' to her. He says she killed the niggar wench by choppin' off her head—now 't wa'n't so—she stomped on her—I remember just how 't was, don't you? Ain't his wife a turrible humbly woman? Her head looks jist like a punkin', and hisen looks like a cheese, don't it? You gwine to hear her lectur to the ladies to-morrer? Guess *I* shall —if it 's as interestin' a lectur as hisen, it 'll be worth hearin'—though I don't think much o' these here wimmin lecturers, no way—the best place for wimmin 's to hum—a mindin' their own bizness, accordin' to my notions. You remember that one that come round a spell ago, a whalin' away about human rights. I thought she 'd ought to be hoss-whipt and shet up in jail, dident you? Dew, for pity's sake, look at Major Coon's wife a blowin' herself with her pocket-handkercher! Did you see her when she come in? Dident she cut a spludge, tho'? I never *did* see such an affected critter as she is in all my born days. When you see any body put on such airs as she does, you may be sure they was raised up out o' the dirt. They 're what Kier calls "the mud aristocrasy." She gwine to have a party Thursday evenin'? How you talk!

—how did you hear?—told you herself, hey? Is she gwine to have married folks and young folks both? Well, them 's the right kind o' parties—enough sight pleasanter 'n where they 're all married folks or all young folks—don't you think so? Well, I should think she'd have a party—hain't never gin a reglar smasher yit—and they 're able to dew it. It's pleasant to git a body's friends and nabors together—has an attendancy to permote sociabilitude. I always thought Miss Coon was a nice woman. Folks has a good deal to say about her, cause she was a hired gal when she was young—but I never thought 't was any thing against her—Miss Jinkins used to run her down dretfully afore they got to be so intimit—and whenever she used to begin a slanderin' Miss Coon afore me. I always made it a pint to stan' up for her. I 've sometimes thought she was *ruther affected*—hain't you?—but then you know it 's natral for some folks to be affected—I hope Mr. Crane's settin' with me to-night won't make any talk. I shouldent wonder tho' if it should—it don't take nothin' to make a story in Wiggletown—but I couldent git up and go off, you know, when he come and sot down by me—t' wouldent a ben perlite—s'pose you 're heerd he 'd called t' our house a number o' times? Hain't?—well that 's curus—it 's all over town. I wish folks wouldent be gitten' up such reports about me. Mr. Crane 's a fine man—a *very* fine man—but if folks thinks I've any idee o'

changin' my condition at present, they 're mistaken I hain't begun to think about no such thing yit. I think it 's a pity if Mr. Crane can't call t' our house once in a while, without the hull naborhood bein' in a blaze about it—I eny most hope he won't see me hum to-night—cause *that* would make folks say 't was a gone case with us sartin sure. I see Kier come in a spell ago—hope *he 'll* go with me—though I s'pose he 's come a purpose to go hum with some o' the gals. There! the lectur's out—Seliny, wait a minnit till the crowd gits along—I don't want to be squashed to death—look, Miss Pendergrass! dew see the widder Jinkins a squeezin' up along side o' Mr. Crane—did you ever! if that ain't *rich!* I guess if she thinks she 's a gwine to ketch him she 's mistaken. As true as the world she 's took his arm, and he 's a gwine hum with her! Well—I 'll bet forty great apples she axed him tew. [The young ladies have beaux, and Kier very dutifully escorts his mother home, *just as she hoped he would.*]

VII.

Mr. Crane about to Propose

JEST in time, Mr. Crane—we 've jest this minnit sot down to tea—draw up a cheer and set by—now don't say a word—I shan't take *no* for an answer. Should a had things ruther different to be sure, if I 'd suspected *you*, Mr. Crane—but I won't appollygise—appolligies don't never make nothin' no better, you know. Why, Melissy, you hain't half sot the table. Where 's the plum sass? thought you was a gwine to git some on 't for tea. I don't see no cake nother, what a kerless gal you be? Dew bring 'em on quick—and Melissy, dear, fetch out one o' them are punkin pies and put it a warmin'. How do you take yer tea, Mr. Crane? clear, hey? how much that makes me think o' husband! he always drunk hisen clear. Now dew make yerself to hum, Mr. Crane—help yerself to things. Do you eat johnnycake? 'cause if you don't I 'll cut some wheat bread—dew hey? we 're all gret hands for injin bread here, 'specially Kier. If I don't make a johnnycake every few days, he says to me, says he, "Mar, why don't you make some injin bread?

it seems as if we hadent never had none." Melissy, pass the cheeze. Kier, see 't Mr. Crane has butter. This ere butter 's a leetle grain frowy. I don't want you to think it 's my make, for 't ain't—Sam Pendergrasses wife (she 'twas Sally Smith) she borrered butter o' me 'tother day, and this 'ere 's what she sent back. I wouldent a had it on if I 'd suspected company. How do you feel to-day, Mr. Crane? Dident take no cold last night? well, I'm glad on 't, I was raly afeared you would, the lectur room was so turrible hot I was eny most roasted, and I wa'n't drest wonderful warm nother, had on my green silk mankiller—and that ain't very thick. Take a pickle, Mr. Crane—I 'm glad you 're a favorite o' pickles. I think pickles is a delightful beveridge—don't feel as if I could make out a meal without 'em—once in a while I go a visitin' where they don't have none on the table—and when I git hum the fust thing I dew 's to dive for the buttry and git a pickle. But husband couldent eat 'em—they was like pizen tew him. Melissy never eats 'em nother—she ain't no pickle hand Some gals eats pickles to make 'em grow poor, but Melissy hain't no such foolish notions. I've brung her up so she *shouldent* have. Why—I 've heerd o' gals drinkin' vinegar to thin 'em off and make ther shin delekit. They say Kesier Winkle—why Kier, what be you pokin' the sass at Mr. Crane for? Melissy jest helped him. I heered Carline Gallup say how 't

Kesier Winkle—why Kier what dew you mean by offerin' the cold pork to Mr. Crane? jest as if he wanted pork for his tea! you see Kier's ben over to the Holler to day on bizness with old uncle Dawson, and he come num with quite an appertite—says to me. says he "Mar, dew set on some cold pork and taters, for I'm as hungry as a bear." Lemme fill up yer cup, Mr. Crane. Melissy, bring on that are pie, I guess it's warm by this time. There! I don't think any body'd say *that* punkin was burnt a stewin'. Take another pickle, Mr. Crane. O, I was a gwine to tell what Carline Gallup said about Kesier Winkle, Carline Gallup was a manty maker—what, Kier? ruther apt to talk? well, I know she *was*—but then she used to be sowin' 't old Winkle's about half the time, and she know'd purty well what went on there—yes—I know sowin' gals is ginerally tattlers. It's a turrible bad trait in any body—'specially in them—they hain't no bizness to go round from house to house a tellin' what guz on among folks that finds 'em ther bread and butter. I never incurridge 'em in it. When I have manty makers to work for me—as sure as they undertake to insiniwate any thing aginst any o' my nabors—I tell ye, I shet 'em up quicker—but I was gwine to tell what Carline Gallup said—Carline was a very stiddy gal—she was married about a year ago—married Jo Bennet—Philander Bennet's son—you remember Phil Bennet, don't you, Mr

Crane? he 't was killed so sudding over to Ganderfield? Though come to think, it must a ben arter you went away from here. He 'd moved over to Ganderfield the spring afore he was killed. Well, one day in hayin'-time he was to work in the hay-field—take another piece o' pie, Mr. Crane—O dew—I insist on 't. Well, he was to work in the hay-field, and he fell off the hay-stack. I s'pose 't wouldent a killed him if it hadent a ben for his comin' kersmash onto a jug that was a settin' on the ground aside o' the stack. The spine of his back went right onto the jug and broke it—broke his back, I mean—not the jug—*that* wa'n't even cracked—curus! wa'n't it? 'T was quite a comfort to Miss Bennet in her affliction—'t was a jug she vallyed—one 't was her mother's. His bein' killed so was a turrible blow to Miss Bennet, the circumstances was so aggravatin'. I writ a piece o' poitry on the occasion and sent it tew her; she said 't was quite consolin'. It says:

O Ganderfield!
Where is thy shield
To guard against grim Death?
He aims his gun
At old and young,
And fires away their breath!

One summer's day
For to 'tend tew his hay,
Mr. Bennet went to the medder—
Fell down from the stack—
Broke the spine of his back,
And left a mournin' widder!

'T was occasioned by his landin'
On a jug that was standin'
Alongside o' the stack o' hay—
Some folks say 't was *what was in it*
Caused the *fall* of Mr. Bennet,
But ther ain't a word of truth in what they say—

'T was true, though, and I know'd it, but of course I wouldent a had Miss Bennet s'pose I did for all creation. She sticks to 't to this day 't was molasses and water 't was in the jug. That 's a likely story! Why! 't was a common report for better 'n a year afore he was killed, that Phil Bennet was a gittin onsteady, but I never let Miss Bennet know 't I had any such idee. She and me was always quite intimit. She was Lorainy Perce, old Peter Perce's darter; you know I sot a gret deal by Lorainy. She took it purty hard when her husband was killed; she went into awful deep mournin'—mournin' was becomin' tew her, she was a dark complected woman; and she wa'n't satisfied with wearin' mournin herself, 't wa'n't enough, she even put black caliker bed-kivers onto her bed. I remember she had a black canton crape gownd all trimmed with crape; but she dident wear her mournin' long, for she got married agin in about three months—married a man by the name o' Higgins—carpenter and jiner by trade: got acquainted with him over in Varmount, when she was there a visitin' tew her sister's—quite a forehanded man. But I was a sayin' that poitry—where had I got tew! O! I know:

How folks can slander
Such a man as Philander
Bennet 's a mystery to me—

Less see—what comes next?

——a mystery to me—
——a mystery to me—

Plague on 't! what 's the reason I can't remember it?

Such a man as Philander
Bennet 's a mystery to me—

Well—I dew declare! 'tis curus how that 's slipt out o' my mind; dew lemme see 'f I can't ketch it—

How folks can slander
Such a man as Philander
Bennet 's a mystery to me——
—a mystery to me—
—— ——— to me—

Well—I 'll give it up—I 've forgot it—that 's a settled pint. It 's queer, tew—it 's the fust time I ever disremembered any o' my poitry—but it can't be helped—mabby it 'll come tew me some time. If it does, I 'll write it down and show it to you, Mr. Crane—I know you 'd be pleased with it. Take another cup o' tea, Mr. Crane. Why! you don't mean to say you 've got done supper! ain't you gwine to take nothin' more? no more o' the pie? nor the sass? well, won't you have another pickle? O, that reminds me—I was a gwine to tell what Carline Gallup said about

Kesier Winkle. Why, Kier seems to me you ain't very perlite to leave the table afore any body else does. O, yes, I remember now, it's singin'-school night—I s'pose it's time you was off, Melissy—you want to go tew don't you? well, I guess Mr. Crane'll excuse you. We'll jest see the table back agin the wall—I won't dew the dishes jest now. Me and Melissy does the work ourselves, Mr. Crane. I hain't kept no gal sence Melissy was big enough t' aid and assist me—I think help 's more plague than profit. No woman that has grow'd up darters needent keep help if she 's brung up her gals as she 'd ought tew. Melissy, dear, put on yer cloak, it's a purty tejus evenin'. Kier, you tie up yer throat, you know you was complainin' of a soreness in 't to-day—and you must be kerful to tie it up when you come hum—it 's dangerous t' egspose yerself arter singin'—apt to give a body the browncritters—and that 's turrible—you couldent sing any more if you should git that, you know. You'd better call for Mirandy and Seliny, hadent you? Don't be out late.

Now, Mr. Crane, draw up to the stove—you must be chilly off there. You gwine to the party to Major Coon's day after to-morrow? S'pose they'll give out ther invitations to-morrow. Dew go, Mr. Crane, it'll chirk you up and dew you good to go out into societry agin. They say it 's to be quite numerous. But I guess ther won't be no dancin' nor highty tighty

dewins. If I thought ther would, I shouldent go myself, for I don't approve on 'em, and couldent countenance 'em. What do you think Sam Pendergrasses wife told me? she said how 't the widder Jinkins (she 't was Poll Bingham) is a havin' a new gownd made a purpose to wear to the party—one o' these 'ere flambergasted, blazin' plaid consarns—with tew awful wide kaiterin flounces round the skirt! Did you ever! How reedickilous for a woman o' her age, ain't it? I s'pose she expects t' astonish the natyves, and make her market tew, like enough—well, she 's to be pitied. O, Mr. Crane! I thought I *should go off* last night when I see that old critter squeeze up and hook onto you. How turrible imperdent—wa'n't it? But seems to me, I shouldent a felt as if I was obleeged to went hum with her if I 'd a ben in your place, Mr. Crane. She made a purty speech about me to the lectur—I 'm a'most ashamed to tell you on 't, Mr. Crane—but it shows what the critter is Kier said he heered her stretch her neck acrost and whisper to old Green, "Mr. Green, don't you think the Widder Bedott seems to be wonderfully took up with *craniology.* She 's the brazin-facedest critter t' ever lived—it does beat all—I never *did* see her equill—but it taken all sorts o' folks to make up the world you know. What did I understand you to say, Mr. Crane?—a few minnit's conversation with me?—deary me! Is it any thing pertickeler, Mr. Crane! O, dear suz! how you

dew flustrate me! not that it 's any thing oncommon for the gentlemen to ax to have privite conversations with me you know—but then—but then—bein' you—it 's different—circumstances alters cases you know—what was you a gwine to say, Mr. Crane?

VIII.

Mr. Crane Walks Out.

O NO, Mr. Crane, by no manner o' means, 't ain't a minnit tew soon for you to begin to talk about gittin' married agin. I am amazed you should be afeerd I 'd think so. See—how long 's Miss Crane ben dead? Six months!—land o' Goshen!—why I 've know'd a number of individdiwals get married in less time than that. There 's Phil Bennett's widder t' I was a talkin' about jest now—she 't was Louisy Perce—her husband hadent been dead but *three* months, you know. I don't think it looks well for a *woman* to be in such a hurry—but for a *man* it 's a different thing—circumstances alters cases, you' know. And then, sittiwated as you be, Mr. Crane, it 's a turrible thing for your family to be without a head to superintend the domestic consarns and tend to the children—to say nothin' o' yerself, Mr. Crane. You dew need a companion, and no mistake. Six months! Good grievous! Why Squire Titus dident wait but *six* weeks arter he buried his fust wife afore he married his second. I thought ther wa'n't no partickler need

o' his hurryin' so, seein' his family was all grow'd up Such a critter as he pickt out, tew! 't was very on suitable—but every man to his taste—I hain't no dispersition to meddle with nobody's consarns. There 's old farmer Dawson, tew—his pardner hain't ben dead but ten months. To be sure he ain't married yet—but he would a ben long enough ago if somebody I know on 'd gin him any incurridgement. But tain't for me to speak o' that matter. He 's a clever old critter and as rich as a Jew—but—lawful sakes! he 's old enough to be my father. And there 's Mr. Smith —Jubiter Smith—you know him, Mr. Crane—his wife (she 't was Aurory Pike) she died last summer, and he 's ben squintin' round among the wimmin ever since, and he *may* squint for all the good it 'll dew him as far as I 'm consarned—tho' Mr. Smith's a respectable man—quite young and hain't no family—very well off tew, and quite intellectible—but I tell yo what—I 'm purty partickler. O, Mr. Crane! it 's ten year come Jinniwary since I witnessed the expiration o' my belovid companion!—an oncommon long time to wait, to be sure—but 't ain't easy to find any body to fill the place o' Hezekier Bedott. I think *you 're* the most like husband of ary individdiwal I ever see, Mr. Crane. Six months! murderation! curus you should be afeard I 'd think 't was tew soon—why I 've know'd—"

Mr. Crane.—"Well widder—I 've been thinking

about taking another companion—and I thought I 'd ask you—"

Widow.—" O, Mr. Crane, egscuse my commotion—it 's so onexpected. Jest hand me that are bottle o' camfire off the mantletry shelf—I 'm ruther faint—dew put a little mite on my handkercher and hold it to my nuz. There—that 'll dew—I 'm obleeged tew ye—now I 'm ruther more composed—you may perceed, Mr. Crane."

Mr. Crane.—" Well widder, I was agoing to ask you whether—whether—"

Widow.—" Continner, Mr. Crane—dew—I know it 's turrible embarrisin'. I remember when my dezeased husband made his suppositions to me, he stammered and stuttered, and was so awfully flustered it did seem as if he 'd never git it out in the world, and I s'pose it 's ginerally the case, at least it has been with all them that 's made suppositions to me—you see they 're ginerally oncerting about what kind of an anser they 're agwine to git, and it kind o' makes 'em narvous. But when an individdiwal has reason to s'pose his attachment 's reciperated, I don't see what need there is o' his bein' flustrated—tho' I must say it 's quite embarrassin' to me—pray continner."

Mr. C.—" Well then, I want to know if you 're willing I should have Melissy?"

Widow.—" The dragon!"

Mr C.—" I hain't said any thing to her about it yet

—thought the proper way was to get your consent first. I remember when I courted Trypheny we were engaged some time before mother Kenipe knew any thing about it, and when she found it out she was quite put out because I dident go to her first. So when I made up my mind about Melissy, thinks me, I 'll dew it right this time and speak to the old woman first—"

Widow.—"*Old woman*, hey! that 's a purty name to call me!—amazin' perlite tew! Want Melissy, hey! Tribbleation! gracious sakes alive! well, I 'll give it up now! I always know'd you was a simpleton, Tim Crane, but I *must* confess I dident think you was *quite* so big a fool—want Melissy, dew ye? If that don't beat all! What an everlastin' old calf you must be to s'pose she 'd *look* at *you*. Why, you 're old enough to be her father, and more tew—Melissy ain't only in her twenty-oneth year. What a reedickilous idee for a man o' your age! as gray as a rat tew! I wonder what this world *is* a comin' tew: 't is astonishin' what fools old widdiwers will make o' themselves! Have Melissy! Melissy!"

Mr. C.—"Why, widder, you surprise me—I 'd no idee of being treated in this way after you 'd ben so polite to me, and made such a fuss over me and the girls."

Widow.—"Shet yer head, Tim Crane—nun o' yer sass to me. *There 's* yer hat on that are table, and

Shet yer head, Tim Crane—nun o' yer sass to me. *There's* yer hat, on that are table, and *here's* the door, and the sooner you put on one, and march out o' t'other, the better it'll be for you.—Page 82.

here's the door—and the sooner you put on *one* and march out o' t' other, the better it 'll be for you. And I advise you afore you try to git married agin, to go out west and see 'f yer wife's cold—and arter ye 're satisfied on that pint, jest put a little lampblack on yer hair—'t would add to yer appearance ondoubtedly and be of sarvice tew you when you want to flourish round among the gals—and when ye 've got yer hair fixt, jest splinter the spine o' yer back—'t wouldent hurt yer looks a mite—you 'd be interely unresistable if you was a *leetle* grain straiter."

Mr. C.—"Well, I never!"

Widow.—"Hold yer tongue—you consarned old coot you—I tell ye *there's* yer hat and *there's* the door—be off with yerself, quick metre, or I 'll give ye a hyst with the broomstick."

Mr. C.—"Gimmeni!"

Widow, rising.—"Git out, I say—I ain't a gwine to stan here and be insulted under my own ruf—and so—git along—and if ever you darken my door agin, or say a word to Melissy, it 'll be the woss for you—that 's all"

Mr. C.—"Treemenjous! What a buster!"

Widow.—"Go 'long—go 'long—go 'long, you everlastin' old gum. I won't hear another word (stops her ears). I won't, I won't, I won't."

[*Exit Mr. Crane.*

(*Enter Melissa, accompanied by Captain Canoot.*)

"Good evenin', cappen! Well, Melissy, hum at last, hey? why dident you stay till mornin'? purty bizness keepin' me up here so late waitin' for you—when I 'm enymost tired to death iornin' and workin' like a slave all day;—ought to ben abed an hour ago. Thought ye left me with agreeable company, hey? I should like to know what arthly reason you had to s'pose old Crane's was agreeable to me? I always dispised the critter—always thought he was a turrible fool—and now I 'm convinced on 't. I 'm completely dizgusted with him—and I let him know it to-night. I gin him a piece o' my mind 't I guess he 'll be apt to remember for a spell. I ruther think he went off with a flea in his ear. Why, cappen—did ye ever hear o' such a piece of audacity in all yer born days? for *him—Tim Crane*—to durst to expire to my hand—the widder o' deacon Bedott! jest as if *I'd* condescen to look at *him*—the old numskull! He don't know B from broomstick; but if he 'd a stayed much longer I 'd a teacht him the difference, I guess. He 's got his *walkin' ticket* now—I hope he 'll lemme alone in futur. And where 's Kier? Gun home with the Cranes, hey! well, I guess it 's the last time. And now, Melissy Bedott, you ain't to have nothin' more to dew with them gals—d 'ye hear? you ain't to sociate with 'em at all arter this—'t would only be incurridgin th' old man to come a pesterin me agin—and I won't have him

round—d'ye hear? Don't be in a hurry, cappen—and don't be alarmed at my gitten' in such passion about old Crane's persumption. Mabby you think 't was onfeelin in me to use him so—and I don't say but what 't was *ruther*, but then he 's so awful dizagreeable tew me, you know—'t ain't *every body* I 'd treat in such a way. Well, if you *must* go, good evenin'! Give my love to Hanner when you write agin—dew call frequently, Cappen Canoot, dew."

IX.

The Widow "Sets her Cap."

MELISSY! ain't that old uncle Dawson a drivin' up to Smith's store? Well, I thought so—I've seen him round considerable lately—ben suspectin' every day he 'd be callin' in here—hain't called sence his wife died. I met him tother day and axed him why he dident come—said he 'd ben very bizzy, but he 'd try to call afore long—so I guess he 's comin' to-day, he 's so spruced up. He 's got on a new overcoat, hain't he? that 's the reason I dident know him at fust. Melissy! spring tew and finish pleetin' on that are cap border, I want to put it on, this ere 's so dirty I should be ashamed to be ketcht in 't. I want you should set the border furder back, and the bow a leetle higher up than they be on this ere, so 's my face won't look so narrer, it makes a body look old to have such a phizmahogany. Here's the ribbin; come, be spry, expect every minnit to see him come out o' the store. You needent sew it wonderful tight, jest pin them bows on, don't stop to sew em—that 'll dew. Guess I 'll put on my ally packer gownd, wouldent ye? it 's

more becomin' than ary other gownd I' ve got. Hold your tongue Melissy—what bizness is it o' yourn if I dew set my cap for old Dawson? He 's rich as mud and hain't a chick nor child to leave his fortin' tew. Univarsaler? I don't bleve a word on 't—he goes tc meetin' quite stiddy lately. I don't care if he is a Universaler nother, there's good folks in all denominations—pin down my collar quick—he 's enough sight better 'n old Crane is with all his sanctimony. Don't you think it 's an improvement settin' the bows higher up? I tell you what, Melissy Bedott, I should like a chance to ride over the heads o' some o' these ere folks that feel so mighty grand, shouldent you? you *shouldent*, hey? Well, I spoze ye wouldent—you'd jest as leve be put down and trod upon as not—you 're jest like yer father, he hadent no more sperrit than an old gooss and you hain't nother. For *my* part I 'd like to be able to show Miss Coon 't I 'm as good as she is and a leetle grain better, neverstandin' she dident invite me to her party, the miserable, low-lifed critter! shall always be glad I dident let you go—spoze I couldent prevented Kier's gwine if he 'd a felt able—shall always be glad he had such a turrible cold he couldent go. There comes Mr. Dawson! he 's gittin' in his cutter. Why! as true as natur he 's druv up street! wonder where he 's gwine! You jest go to the door and see where he stops—folks 'll talk if I go, every body's a watchin' me. Well, where did

he go? To widder Jinkinses!! land o' liberty! well I'll give it up now! I'll bet a cookey she called him in, 'twold be egzackly like her. Well, seein' I'm drest, I'll just run in to Sam Pendergrasses. I want to see Miss Pendergrass—I'll take my knittin', for mabby I shant be hum to tea. If I should stay there to tea don't you and Kier be a lettin' into the plum sass and cake, as you did 't other day when I went to Deacon Knipe's. Git some o' them are cold beans in the cubberd, and the bread 't was left at dinner, there's enough on 't, don't cut no more—ye won't want no butter if ye have beans. And if Mr. Dawson calls, you come arter me, d'ye hear? (On her return in the evening she finds Mr. Jupiter Smith visiting Melissa.) How *dew* you do, Mr. Smith? Ben here long? I'm sorry I was out when you came—glad you stayed 'till I got back tho'. When did you git home from Varmount? To-day, hey! How did you find your parents? So you mist that are all-killin' genteel party last night? Well, I guess you dident lose much —'t ain't no credit to nobody to go to such a place. Sam Pendergrasses wife 's ben a tellin' me about it, she was there, and of all the strains ever I heerd on I should think that was the cap sheef. Why wa'n't I there? 'cause I don't sociate with such company as the Coons. I wa'n't invited, to be sure—she 'd as soon a thought of invitin' the *governor* as me. I shouldent a went a step if had a ben invited—why, Miss

Coon used to be a hired gal in her young days! and now sence she 's got a hyst in the world, she tries to cut a spludge and make folks think she s a lady—but any body that 's used to good company, can see in a minnit that *she 's* no lady. They say the way she performed last night was a caution. She had a gret long ostridge feather in her head, and she paraded round like a grannydear—bowin' and smilin' and curchyin' with as much dignitude as if she 'd a ben the queen o' Sheby—wa'n't it laffable? If I 'd a ben there I know I should a snorted right out in her face. Old Crane was there tew, pokin' round among the gals—mighty partickler to Kesier Winkle, they say. Did you ever! and his wife hain't ben dead but six months! ain't it awful? Well, I 'm glad I 've got rid o' the critter at last. He 's ben stickin' round me ever since he come here—and it *did* seem as if I should go crazy, he 's so terrible disagreeable—but I gin him a check on the tow-path 't other day—and I ruther guess he 'll lemme alone arter this. Kesier Winkle! ain't it reedickelous? I don't see what he could fancy about her, do you? ther ain't nothin' of her but her purty face—and I never thought *that* was so awful handsome as some folks does. Her red cheeks is her only beauty, and they dew say *them* ain't natral. But I don't want to hurt Kesiah Winkle—she 's an unoffensive, simple critter—I shall pity her if she gits Tim Crane, he 's the meanest of all created critters.

I knowed him in his young days. I mean when he was *ruther* young, and I was *very* young indeed. I knowed him always till he went to the West—and I'd as soon think o' havin' the "old boy" as him. He don't know nothin' only how to make money—O yes he does to—he knows how to *keep* it. Of all stingy mortals he's the stingiest. Husband dispised him—used to say, Tim Crane was so tight he fairly begrudged the air he breathed—and it 's a fact. Massy tew me! it does seem onaccountable how any body can be so beset to get married as to take up with him—don't it? He's the consarndest old gump tew 't ever was—no intellectibility at all. I always knowed he was a dretful ninny, but I *dident* think he was so awful silly as he is till 't other night at the Phreenyogical lectur. He come and sot down by me; I was turribly provoked to have him a stickin' round me in public so, but I couldent help it, you know; I was purty haughty tew him, I tell ye. Well, if you 'll believe it—as true as I *set here*—when the lecterer was tellin' about the organs in folkses heads, old Crane thought he meant them are music organs—it 's a fact; I never was so dizgusted in my life. Well, he ain't worth talkin' about, and I make it a pint never to talk about nobody. I eny most wish you had a ben to that party, Mr. Smith; it must a ben quite entertainin' to see the dewins. They say the widder Jinkins made herself perfectly redickious. She was drest

off like a young gal—false curls on and artifishel flowers in her cap. I think that's very unproper for a woman o' her age—why, I never wear 'em, and I ain't nowhere nigh so old as she is—'t is amazin! and they say she cut round and hollered and laffed and tried to be wonderful interestin'. They say she 's a tryin' to draw in old uncle Dawson; wouldent it be awful if she should coax him up to marry her? but if she should, he 's a bigger fool than I took him for, that 's all—what say? *is* gwine to marry her? why Jubiter Smith! I don't bleve it—if 't was so Sam Pendergrasses wife would a knowed it—she knows every thing that guz on in the place—though she and Miss Jinkins ain't very friendly; but I know 't ain't so—who told you, Mr. Smith? Miss Jinkins herself!! land o' Nod!! Next week!! you don't!! well—I 'll give it up now! The widder Jinkins a gwine to be married to old uncle Dawson! If that ain't the last thing I ever heerd on! What *is* this world a comin' tew? How redicklous! well, she 's a mean, good-for-nothin', underhanded critter to go to work a settin' her traps for that poor old man, and, conduce him to make such a flumbergasted fool o' himself in his old age! What a dog's life she 'll lead him tew! Why she 's the awfullest tempered critter 't ever was made. I 've knowed Poll Bingham from a gal, and I don't bleve Bill Jinkins would a turned out such a misrable shack if he 'd a had decent woman for a wife. Poll

Jinkins and old Dawson? tribbilation!! Why, she's been ravin' distracted to git married ever since her husband died, and arter all, she couldent git nobody but that poor decripped, superanimated old feller. If she wa'n't dretful anxious to git marrid she wouldent take *him*. Melissy, dear, go down suller and git some apples---some o' the seek-no-furders—don't fall down and break yer neck, darlin'. Old Dawson! why he's a Univarsaler! ain't it awful? I'd as soon think o' havin' a Hoppintot. If that had a ben the *only* thing ther was aginst him, *I* shouldent a had him. I never gin him no incurridgement—just as if I were a gwine to take up with Tom, Dick, and Harry, arter bein' the wife o' such a man as Deacon Bedott! He's an amazin' ignorant old coot, tew—'t is surprisin' how little he knows! Git some knives and plates, now, Melissy—help yourself to apples, Mr. Smith. I can tell you a circumstance that actilly took place once—that 'll show you what an ignorant old heathen he is. His wife used to belong to Parson Potter's church, and once in a while he used to come to meetin' with her, and he always used to go to sleep as soon as the sarmon begun, and sleep till meetin' was out—well, one Sabberday old Dawson was to meetin'—and Parson Potter preached some doctrinal pint—I don't now remember what was the theme of his subject—but any way, arter he 'd gin out his text, says he, "Brothrin—the subject under consideration this

mornin' is one o' the biggest importance, and I 've gin it my unmitigated attention for a number o' year —but I 'm sorry to say, the commontaters don't agree with me." Well, old Dawson heerd that—and then he dropt asleep as usual. The next arternoon Miss Potter had company—what 's called a "deacon party," you know—that is—all the deacons and ther wives. There was Deacon Kenipe and his wife, Deacon Crosby and his wife, Deacon Whipple and his wife, and Deacon Bedott and me. Well, as we was all a settin' there about the middle o' the arternoon, who should come in but old uncle Dawson, luggin' a mortal gret sass-basket—"Well Parson," says he, "you said yesterday in meetin' how 't the *common taters* didcnt agree with ye—so I've fetched you some *oncommon* ones—the very best that ever was growd—for I reckoned 't was tew bad you should be obleeged to live on common, poor taters, while I had such a bundance o' good uns. It 's a kind I fetcht from Connecticut—where I used to live—nobody round here hain't got nun like em. They call em "Harrington blue-skins"—you needent be afeared but what they 'll agree with ye—ye might eat em all day, and not feel a grain the woss for 't."

Now, Mr. Smith, *that's* a fact—I was knowin' to 't —Parson Potter, he thankt him over and over agin— and we all contrived to keep our faces strait till he 'd got out o' the house—and then, what a roarin' ther was! Parson Potter told us never to mention it in

creation—cause the old man meant well—but some how or other it got out—such things *will*, you know. But, as Deacon Whipple remarked—it 's lamentyble that any body in this free and inlightened kintry should be so blind and ignorant. But he 's good enough for widder Jinkins any day—don't you say so? Well, what *is* Wiggletown a comin' tew? Poll Jinkins and old uncle Dawson! it 's the laffablest thing I 've heerd on this many a day! he, he, he! I shall go off!!

The last news that I had from Wiggletown, was that Melissa is soon to be married to the worthy Mr. Jupiter Smith; and that Kier is engaged to Selina Crane. It is supposed that the widow never would have given her consent to these matches, had it not been for the interference of Mr. and Mrs. Magwire, who have at last induced her to give up her opposition to the wishes of her children. She, however, continues to growl about it occasionally, and has become perfectly "*dizgusted*" with Wiggletown and every body in it, declaring, that "it ain't what it used to be—all run down—not fit for respectable people to live in—and she don't mean to have nothin' to dew with nobody in a place where every body 's atryin' to injure her, and put her down—and so."

X.

The Widow Resolves to Leave Wiggletown.

THE Widow Bedott having resolved to leave Wiggletown, makes her farewell visit to her friend Mrs. Higgins, of Ganderfield.

"Did ye know I was gwine to quit Wiggletown? dident hey? Well I be—I lay out to go next week. I am gwine to Scrabble Hill, to sister Magwire's, to spend the winter, at least—and if I like it purty well, mabby I shall conclude to make it my native place, and never come back to Wiggletown—without 't is jest a visitin'. Its turrible lonesome to be keepin' house all alone as I be now since Kier and Melissy was married and dewin' for themselves. Ary one on 'em would be glad to have me live with 'em—but some how I don't like the idee. Melissy's got a nice man for a husband. Jubiter Smith's a *very* nice man—and she 's very pleasantly sitiwated. But I 'd ruther not live with 'em—shouldent feel independent, ye know. And as for livin' to Kier's—I guess it 'll be *after* this, any how, afore I dew that. Seliny's well enough, fur as I know. I hain't nothin'

against Seliny—only I don't like that *stock*. I was opposed to Kier's marryin' into that family—but he was so determined on 't I gin up my opposition and tried to make the best on 't. But I can 't be intirely reconciled to 't, dew what I will. It 's werry onpleasant to be connected with that tribe any way. Especially the old man—I never *could* bear Tim Crane—he 's so mortal mean. Dident know it? well, then, you don't know him as well as I dew. Why, I 've been acquainted with him ever sence he was quite a young man, and I can testify 't he was always as tight as a drum-head. How else did he make his money, pray? he never could a did it by his *wits*, for he hain't none. Yes—I always knowd Tim Crane—so did my poor husband—he used to have dealins with him, and *he* said, that of all born skin-flints 't ever he had to do with, Tim Crane was the biggest. Yes—I always dispised the critter—and then to think that any body should say 't I was a tryin' to ketch him!—'t is scandicilous! Hain't heerd nobody say so? Well thir *is* such a story all round Wiggletown—and I guess I know who started it, tew—and that was old Dawson's wife—she 't was widder Jinkins—she 's always a runnin' me down—and she feels oncommon ryled up against me now cause she knows the old man was arter me 'fore he took her. I know she started the story, cause Sam Pendegrasses wife told me on 't—and she said she heerd it from Minervy Hawley—and

Minervy Hawley heerd it from Major Coon's wife—and Major Coon's wife and Miss Dawson is wonderful intimit—and I s'pose Miss Dawson told Miss Coon. But what she says ain't worth mindin'. 'T is curus 't nobody should pay any attention to 't. *Me* set my cap for old Crane! Gracious! I never could bear the sight of him. I tell you, I was glad enough when he got married to Kesier Winkle—though *'t was* a most reedicilous piece o' business, wa'n't it? To think o' his marryin' that foolish flirt of a gal! young enough to be his darter, tew! But I rejoiced from the bottom o' my heart when it took place—for, thinks me, folks 'll stop ther gab about him and me now. You see, he 'd been stickin' round me ever sence he came back here—and ther was considerable talk that him and me was a gwine to make a match—and 't was very distressin' to me to be the subjick of such a report. I done all in my power to give him to understand that his attentions was dizagreeable tew me—but somehow another he wouldent take the hint. I dident want him to offer himself tew me, you know. I always make it a pint when I see 't an individdiwal's pleased with me and I don't recipperate ther sentiments—I say, I always make it a pint to disencourage 'em all I can—for it hurts my feelins amazinly to be obleeged to refuse a man; it's so mortifyin' tew 'em, ye know, to be told they ain't wanted. I always git rid on 't when I can—and I tried tew in this case—but the old

coot was so awful numbheaded I couldent beat any thin' into him. He hung on like the toothache—till I got out of all patience. At last he come t' our house one evening—(Now Miss Higgins, I hope you won't never mention this to nobody. I shouldent a told *you* on 't—I make it a pint never to tell o' such things. Only seein' we was a speakin' o' the story bein' round that I sot my cap for him, I thought I 'd let you know how much foundation ther was for 't—but don't let it git no furder for pity's sake. I don't wish Mr. Crane no harm). But I was a gwine to tell ye—He took the opportunity one night when I was alone, to come over t' our house. I ginerally contrived to keep Melissy or Keir in the room when he came there; and I 'spose he' d noticed it, for he come over a singin' school evenin', when he knowd they 'd be gone. I tell ye I was mad when I see the critter come in. I treated him as cool as a cowcumber; but neverstandin' all that, if you 'll bleve it, he up and popped the question! At first I answered him as civil as I could, and begged to be egscused; but he wouldent take *no* for an answer; and so I was obleeged to be purty hash with him and told him I dident want nothing to dew with him, and wished he 'd reitterate and leave me alone and never trouble me no more. And will ye bleve it! the critter continued to hang on till I was necessiated to order him out o' the house and tell him if ever he darkened my doors agin he 'd ketch it. So

at last I got rid of him; and that's the upshot o' the matter betwixt old Crane and me. 'T was about tew months afore he was married to Kesier Winkle—and *disappinted me*, as they say. Disappinted! it looks like bein' disappinted, don't it? Its awful provokin' to be talked about as I be, ain't it? But I've always ben the subjick o slander ever since I lived here, and that's since I was quite a gal. What a turrible place for talkin'. Wiggletown is, though! a regular slander mill. It's a great deal woss than it used be—and 't was always bad enough. I'm perfectly dizgusted with the place, expecially sence them stories about old Crane and me. It makes me outrageous to be lied about so by such folks as old Dawson's wife and Miss Major Coon. Miss Coon—she don't like me cause I hain't never knuckled tew her. You know she thinks she's a great character sence she married Major Coon. But I can tell her "I ain't so fond o' pork as to eat hog yokes!" Miss Pendergrass says, I hadent ought to mind none o' the stories folks tells—and I don't mean tew. But then it's made me clear sick and tired o' Wiggletown. I'm completely dizgusted with it, and don't mean to live there no longer if I can help it. I've ben some time considerin' what's best to dew, and I've made up my mind to go to Scrabble Hill to spend the winter with sister Magwire. I was there and stayed a fortnight about two year ago—had a very pleasant visit. At first I thought quite strong o' visit-

in' my brother, Christopher Columbus Poole, away in Varmount—never was there but once, and that was fore husband died. But I 've giv 't up on account o' the family bein' Baptists. I can't stan the Baptists no way; and if I went there I should have to go to the Baptist meetin' and that would be a turrible cross tew me; so I 've concluded to go to Scrabble Hill for a spell. Sister Magwire 's a fine woman, though she ain't very intellectible. I always sot a great deal by her. No doubt she 'll be wonderful glad to have me come. She must be considerable lonesome now. Her only son 's gone off to study doctrin; and she 's alone quite a good deal. Her husband carries on the shoemakin' bisness quite extensive; and he 's to his shop the heft o' the time. To speak the truth, I ain't sorry her son 's gone, for he ain't no favoryte o' mine. He 's growed up to be ruther a dizagreeable young man—always pokin' fun at every body. He takes after his father in that respect. Brother Magwire 's quite a teaze, though he knows better 'n to hurt folk's feelins as Jeff does. I think I shall enjoy myself pretty well at Scrabble Hill. The society is quite refined there, and that suits me, ye know. I feel out o' place in Wiggletown; ther ain't no refinement there at all. What little there used to be 's all run out. The inhabiters now 's a perfect set o' Goffs and Randals. I'm thoroughly dizgusted with the hull town and every body in it, exceptin' Kier and Melissy, and Sam

Pendergrasses wife. If 't wa'n't that *hey* live there, Wiggletown might go to destruction for all I'd care.

LETTER FROM JEFFERSON MAGUIRE TO HIS COUSIN, MRS. JASPER DOOLITTLE.

COONVILLE, Oct. 27, 1847.

DEAR COUSIN NANCY:

What gloomy, miserable weather this is! But I suppose that your domestic cares and your good husband, occupy so much of your attention, that you 've hardly time to growl about the weather. I assure you I feel forlorn enough to-day. Probably more so, for having just returned from a visit of a week at father's; and home is so much pleasanter to me than any other place, that I am always discontented for a while after coming away.

I suppose you would like to know what the good folks at Scrabble Hill are doing; so I 'll tell you as far as I know. Father and mother get on about after the old sort, and there seems to be no great change among the other inhabitants. Sam Baily is paying attention to Katy Carey, and Pardon Hittibone and Maria Louisa Wilson are to be married next month. Charity Grimes and Sally Hugle are as *old* and as disagreeable as ever, if not a *leetle* more so, and full as anxious to dispose of themselves as ever. Old Elder

Sniffles, the Baptist minister, lost his wife about two months ago, and his personal appearance has greatly improved since that afflictive event (no uncommon thing as respects widowers, I believe). The Footes have sold out, and gone to Wisconsin, and—well I believe, you have now all the village news, excepting one piece of information, and that, as it is the most important, I have reserved till the last. A distinguished stranger arrived at Scrabble Hill some two weeks since. Who do you guess it is? Why, no less a personage than the Widow Bedott, interesting relict of Deacon Hezekiah Bedott. She has actually inflicted herself upon father's folks for the whole winter. What a time they 'll have of it, won't they? Mother is so well disposed, that she tries to put up with it cheerfully; but nevertheless, it is pretty evident that she looks upon Aunt Bedott as a prodigious bore. She had been there but two or three days when I went home, and she did not appear overjoyed to see me. For some reason or other she does n't take a particular fancy to me. Mother says it 's because I teaze her sometimes. But there is something so *decidedly rich* about Aunt Silly, that I can not for my life help having a little fun at her expense occasionally. On Sunday morning I said to her, when mother was n't by, "Well, aunty, where do you go to meeting today?" "Where do I go to meetin'!" said she "what a question! why, where *should* I go but to my own

meetin'?" "Oh," said I, "I thought perhaps you'd like to hear Elder Sniffles, he's such an interesting preacher." "What!" said she, "me go to the Baptist meetin'! I hope you ain't in arnest, Jeff; why I'd as soon go to the theatre as go there. I have a sufferin' contempt for the Baptists. They think nobody can't git to heaven without bein' dipped, dippin's a savin' audience with them. Why, come to think, I remember that Elder Sniffles. When I was here afore, yer mother and me was into Mr. Hugle's one evenin'—they 're Baptists, ain't they? and Elder Sniffles and his wife come in there to call. If my memory serves me, he's ruther a tall, scrawny man with eyes that looks like a couple o' peeled onions, and kind o' squintin' tew, and seems to me he hadn't no hair nardly." "O!" said I, "you'd scarcely know him now, he's got a wig and wears spectacles, which improves his appearance vastly." "Well, I should think it needed improvin'," said she.

"By the way, aunty," said I, "did you know that Mrs. Sniffles was dead?" "You don't say so!" said he. "Yes," said I: "she died only a few weeks ago. I feel sorry for the Elder—he must be so lonesome." "So do I," said she with a sigh. "It's a dredful thing to lose a companion, and I s'pose the Baptists feel it as much as any body." "Undoubtedly," said I; "Elder Sniffles seems deeply afflicted—his sermons, they say, have been more interesting than ever, since

his loss; something mournfully solemn about them," —so I went on for some time, dilatin' upon the elder's eloquence and talents, and loneliness and all that. I assure you I talked pretty fast, for fear mother 'd come in before I could say all I wanted to—and I was afraid she 'd throw all the fat in the fire. At length aunt Silly said that I 'd raised her curiosity to such a pitch that she really felt quite a desire to hear the elder preach —she had a good notion to go to the Baptist meeting for once. Of course I offered my services as escort. Shortly after mother came in, and was quite surprised when Aunt Bedott announced her intention of going to the Baptist meeting. "What 's your notion?" said mother. "Oh!" said aunty, "Jeff's excited my curiosity so much about Elder Sniffles, that I feel as if I 'd like to go and hear him preach." Mother looked at me for an explanation—so I thought my best course was to own up—for I knew that mother would n't expose me, and tell Aunt Bedott that I was hoaxing her, as it would serve to increase her antipathy to me, which mother was anxious to do away. Therefore I remarked that I 'd been telling aunt Silly what an eloquent man elder Sniffles was. Mother said nothing. then, but as soon as we were alone, she took me to task roundly. However I carried the point, and aunty and I went off to Baptist meeting. We had a seat very near the pulpit. As usual, the Elder whaled away through his nose—thumped the desk, and went over

and over again with the same thing—using a little different words each time, without ever making the most remote approach to any thing like the shadow of an idea. But it would have done you good to see with what devout and earnest attention Aunt Bedott regarded him all the time. Once she was deeply affected, and sobbed in a manner that attracted universal attention. It was on his making the very *original* observation that "this was a changing world, and we couldn't calculate with any degree of certainty upon any thing!" When we were going home, Aunt Bedott said—"Well, Jefferson you was right—elder Sniffles is a very interesting preacher—very, indeed. I never was more edified in my life than I 've been this mornin'. He ain't so bad *lookin'*, nother, as I was thinkin' he was: that ere wig makes him look ten year younger—a body never 'd think o' such a thing as its bein' a wig—it 's so natral. And them specs, too: they 're an improvement on account o' kind o' hidin' the pecooliarities of his eyes. I don't know as I should a' took him for the same indiwiddiwal. But then his sarmon!—Oh, Jefferson, that was what I call a *sarmon* in earnest! I begin to think 't ain't right to be so prejudiced against other denominations. I should like to be introduced to Elder Sniffles, and hear him converse." Wouldn't it be *rich*, Nancy, to be an invisible listener to the conversation? The next day I came away. I shall be quite curious to know whether

Aunt Bedott continues in her liberal frame of mind—but I sha'n't dare to ask mother a word about it when I write—so I must remain in ignorance until I go home again at Thanksgiving. But I'm writing a tremendously long letter, so I'll just stop where I am. Remember me to cousin Jasper, and believe me your affectionate cousin.

XI.

The Widder Trades with a Peddler.

"GOOD mornin' marm! can I trade any with ye to-day?"

"Land o' liberty! I want to know if that's you, Jabe Clark?"

"'Tain't nobody else—but raly you've got the advantage o' me."

"Hev hay! well I guess it's the fust time any body got the advantage o' ye—do ye remember them shoes ye sold me in Wiggletown?"

"Jingo! I'll be darned if 't ain't the Widder Bedott! why—ye look younger and handsomer 'n ever—"

"It took them shoes to stir up yer memory—I always tho't I'd like to hev a recknin' with ye about comin' such a trick on me—"

"But Widder—"

"None o' yer buts—dident ye tell me they was fustrate leather—and worth ten shillin' every cent on 't—but seein' 't was me I mout hev 'em for a dollar, say! and dident they bust out at the sides and

run down at the heels and split on the instep in less than a week's time—and dident ye *know* they would serve me so when ye sold 'em to me—say?"

"But Widder ye know—"

"Yes I *know*—I know 't want the fust time you 'd cheated me—but I ruther guess 't was the last time—and I ain't the only one that 's made up ther minds not to hev no more deal with ye—Sam Pendergrasses wife says 't if ever you darken her doors again you 'll ketch it."

"Well, Miss Bedott, to tell ye the plain truth, them shoes hev laid heavy on my conscience for some time back—I dew confess with compunction that I had some shortcomin's in those days—I did use to git the better o' my customers sometimes in a bargin—I 've felt quite exercised about it lately. Ye see, Widder, I warn't actiwated by religious principles then, that was the difficulty."

"Do ye mean to insiniwate that ye 've met with a change?"

"I think I may confidentially say I hev."

"How long sence?"

"Wal, about a year and a half. I experienced religion over in Varmount, at one o' brother Armstrong's protracted meetin's. I tell ye, Widder, them special efforts is great things—ever sence I *come out* I 've felt like a new critter."

"Well, I hope you 've *acted* like one, and restored

four-fold, as scripter commands, to them you 've got the better of. If ye did I guess yer pockets was cleaned out amazin' quick."

"I'm free to say, I hev made restitution as fur as I was able."

"Well, then, ye 'd better hand over that dollar I paid for them shoes—or at least six shillin' on 't, they wa'n't worth over twenty-five cents at the furdest."

"Wal, I 'll tell ye Widder how I ginerally dew in such cases. I make a practice o' lettin' on 'em *trade* it out (he begins to open his boxes), I 've got a lot o' goods that 'll make yer eyes water, I guess. I make it a pint o' carryin' a finer stock than ary other travelin' merchant in this section."

"Ye needent undew 'em—I hain't no notion o' tradin'."

"But 't won't cost nothin' to jest look at 'em, ye know—there, them pocket handkerchers is superior to any thing ye 'll find this side o' New York."

"Wonderful thin though."

"Sheer, ye mean, that 's what they call sheer, a very desirable quality in linning cambrick. I tell ye Widder there ain't no such handkerchers in Scrabble Hill."

"I 'll bet a cent they 're half cotton."

"Half cotton! jingo! they ain't half cotton—I 'll stake my repertation on 't—I mean my present repertation."

"What dew ye ax for 'em?"

"Wal, them handkerchers had orto fetch twelve shillin' apiece. I never sold none for less, but bein' as I dident dew exactly the fair thing about the shoes, if ye 'll take a couple I' ll strike off tew shillin', and let ye hev 'em for tew dollars and seventy-five cents."

"Land o' liberty! ye scare me, Jabe! I 'm wantin' some nice handkerchers wonderfully *jest now*, but dear me! I 'd go without to the eend o' my days, afore I'd pay such a price for 'em."

"Wal' then, say tew dollars fifty cents, I 'm willin' to let 'em go for that considerin' the shoes."

"Twenty shillin'! its awful high, I won't give it."

"Say eighteen shillin' then, nobody could ax less than that, I 'm sure."

"Eighteen shillin'! it 's tew much—I can't afford it."

"Tew dollars then—take 'em for tew dollars—it's the same as givin' on 'em away. I tell ye Widder, ye wouldent git such a chance if 't wa'n't for my feelin's in relation to them shoes. I told ye they was worth twelve shillin' apiece, and now I offer 'em tew ye for tew dollars a pair, one dollar struck off, that 's all ye paid for the shoes."

"I never gi'n so much for handkerchers in all my born days, can't ye take no less?"

"Not a cent Widder, not a cent."

"Well, then, I don't feel as if I could afford to take 'em."

"And so I s'pose I may as well put 'em up agin —wal, I 'm sorry, not that it would be any objict to me to let them go so cheap, only I thought I 'd like to set my mind at rest about the matter o' the shoes. I 've offered to make it up and you 've refused to have it made up, so the fault is yourn, not mine, my conscience is clear; if folks will persirt in stannin' in their own light I can't help it, that 's all." (He replaces them in the box.)

"Lemme jest look at 'em once more, Jabe—these *is* purty—*can't* take no less than tew dollars?"

"Not a red cent less; and I tell ye agin it 's the same as givin' on 'em away at that."

"Sure they ain't half cotton?"

"Jest as sure as I be that my name 's Jabez Clark."

"Well, then, I guess I shall hev to take 'em."

"I 'm glad on 't for *your* sake—as I said afore, t' ain't no objict to me. I 've got a piece o' silk I want to show ye, Miss Bedott, a very desirable article for a weddin' dress."

"Lawful sakes! I hope ye don't think *I* want such a thing."

"Wal, folks tells singular stories. I heerd something down here."

"O shaw! 't won't dew to believe all ye hear."

"I sold Elder Sniffles a black satting stock and a buzzom pin yesterday s'pose he wanted 'em for a *particklar occasion*."

"Git out Jabe! what sort of a buzzom pin was it?"

"Wal, 't was a very desirable pin; topiz sot in gold. I sold it tew him for a'most nothing. I always make it a pint to accommodate the clergy in that way, never charge 'em full price. I always lookt upon the Elder as a very gifted man—I staid here over the Sabbath once to hear him preach—I tell ye, Widder, 't was powerful pleadin'. I'm ruther inclined to the Baptist order myself—ben quaverin' on the subjict ever sence I was brought out—in fact I 've thought hard o' givin' up the travelin' marcantile business and studyin' deology; but, on the hull, I 've about gi'n it up—'t wouldent do for me to be confined to preachin'—my health requires such amount of exercise. But here 's that silk, did ye ever see the beat on 't? now that 's what I call *splendid*—it 's ginniwine French—they call it 'grody—grody—grody'—what the dogs—them French names is so consarnid hard to remember—O, I know now, 'grody flewry;' jest take a realizin' sense o' the colors—how elegant them stripes is shaded off, green and yaller and purple, reglar French trycolor, as they call it."

"It 's slazy though, ther ain't much heft to 't."

"Heft! to be sure 't aint heavy, but heavy silks ain't worn no more, ye know; they 're all out o' fash-

ion—these ere light French silks is all the go now—ye see folks has found out how much more durable they be than the heavy ones—them 's so apt to crack—why one o' these ere 'll outlast a dozen on 'em. I 've got jest a pattern on 't left—had a hull piece—sold tew dresses off on 't, one to Judge Hogobome's daughter in Greenbush, and the other to the Reverend Dr. Fogo's wife in Albany. Now, Widder, what do ye say to takin' that, 't would make a most hyastical weddin' dress."

"Well, 't ain't for me to say I 'm wantin' such an article—but s'posen I was—I 've got a new one that 'll dew. Sister Magwire pickt it out for me. She hain't got much taste about colors—but she 's a good judge of quality."

"Got it made up?"

"No; but the mant-maker's a comin' to morrer to make it."

"Lemme see it, if ye please. I want to compare it with this." (She brings it). "Jingo!—I 'll be darned if 't ain't stun color! the fag end of *all* colors! Why, a body 'd think 't was some everlastin' old maid instid of a handsome young widder that had chose such a distressid thing for a weddin' dress."

"Lawful sakes! I dident say 't was a weddin' dress—and I dident say I chose it myself: for, to tell the truth, I dident more 'n half like it: but sister Magwire stuck to 't was more suitable than ary other color—

and then tew, she thought 't was such an amazin' good piece."

"Good piece! Jinge! what did ye pay for 't?"

"A dollar a yard. Ther 's twelve yards on 't—got it o' Parker and Pettibone, and they said 't was fust-rate."

"Wal, I don't s'pose *they* meant to cheat ye—they got cheated themselves when they bought that silk. I always know'd that Parker and Pettibone wa'rn't no judges o' goods. The fact is, them New York marchants puts off their old onsailable articles onto 'em, and make 'em think they 're ginteel and desirable. I tell ye, Widder, ye got most consarnedly took in when ye bought that silk. Ye won't wear it three times afore it 'll crack out at the elbows, and fray out round the bottom."

"Well, I hain't ben suited with it none o' the time—shouldent a got it if sister Magwire hadent a ding-dong'd me into 't. Ther was a blue one ther 't I liked a great deal better."

"I tell ye, Widder, it raly hurts my feelins to think o' your standin' up along side of Elder Sniffles with such a consumid lookin' thing on."

"O shaw!—stop yer hectorin' about the Elder. I ain't obleeged to hev every body that 's after me."

"Wal I know that—only such chances as Elder Sniffles ain't to be sneezed at, ye know. But speakin' o' that silk—if 't wa'n't for standin' in my own light

so consarnidly, I 'll be darned if I wouldent offer to swop for a small matter o' boot."

"Boot! that 's wuss than the shoes! S'pose I 'd go to givin' boot to git rid on 't after payin' an awful sight o' money for 't in the fust place?"

"Wal, 't would be ruther aggravatin' if you 'd got a full pattern—you hain't but twelve yards. Of course ye dident calkilate to hev no trimmin', or ye 'd a got more."

"I thought I shouldent trim it considerin'—"

"Yes, I understand—considerin' 't was for a minister's wife—"

"Git out, Jabe—I dident say so—"

"I tell ye, Widder, you 're tew partickler—minister's wives is as dressy as any body. The Reverend Doctor Fogo's wife had hern made up with three wide cross-grained pieces round the skirt. Jingo! they sot it off slick. These ere stripid silks look fust rate with cross-grain trimmin'—seems to go windin' round and round, and looks so graceful kinder. I seen lots on 'em in the city. How them city ladies would larf at such a dress as yourn! But out here in the country folks don't know nothin'."

"If I 'd a trusted to my own taste, I shouldent a got it. I wish to massy I hadent a ben governed by sister Magwire."

"Jingo! wouldent it be quite an idee for you to be the fust in Scrabble Hill to come out in a 'grody flew-

ry.' Them colors would be wonderful becomin' to you. Jest lemme hold it up to ye and you stan' up and look in the glass. Jingo! it 's becominer than I thought 't would be. I tell ye Widder, you must *hev* that silk, and no mistake."

"Dear me! I wish I could afford to swop—What 's it woth?"

"Wal, I can't expect to git the full vally on 't. I'll sell it tew ye as low as I feel as if I could—it's a high-priced silk—bein' as it 's so fashionable now; but I 'll tell *you*, Miss Bedott—though I wouldent tell every body—the fact is, I got that silk at a bargin, and of course I can afford to let it go for considerable less than I could if I 'd a paid ful price. Ye see the marchant I took it of was on the pint o' failin', and glad to sell out for any money. He dident ax but a dollar a yard.—Ther 's fourteen yards left, as you can see by the folds—and you may hev it for fourteen dollars, jest what it cost me. I tell ye, widder, it 's a bargin."

"Land o' liberty! fourteen dollars! I can't think on 't."

"Wal, then, I 'll dew still better by ye. I want you should hev this silk—so s'pozen I take yourn off yer hands, and you take this, and jest pay me the balance. Mabby I could sell that to some distressid old quaker woman that wants an every-day frock—and what if couldent, I should hev the satisfaction o'

dewin' you a favor any how.—What d 'ye say to that?"

"Lemme see—the balance—that would be tew dollars. I 've paid twelve for t' other already. I don't know about spendin' so much money—don't know what sister Maguire 'd say to 't. She 's gone over to see old aunt Betsy Crocket—aunt Betsey 's sick. Sister Maguire hates striped silk, and pedlars tew—won't never trade with 'em—"

"Jingo! come to think on 't, I 'm a tarnal goose to be willin' to stand in my own light jest for the sake of accommodatin' the wimmin folks—'t ain't no object to me." (He folds up the silk.)

"Stop a minnit, Jabe. I 'll resk it. It 's time I was my own mistress, any how. I know sister Maguire 'll say it 's tew gay for me, and call it flambergasted, but I don't care—"

"Gay! I wish to massy she could see a dress that Elder Cole's wife out east has got—entirely red—the reddest kind o' red tew—stripes as wide as my hand. *That's* ruther flambergasted for a minister's wife. So ye think ye 'll take it, hey?"

"Dunno but I will on the hull."

"Wal, I s'pose I 'd orto stan to my offer—but I tell ye, Widder, it 's a bargin."

"Fourteen yards, ye say?"

"Fourteen yards plump—ye may count the folds at the edge. Ye can hev cross-grain trimmin' if ye take

a notion. Jingo! won't it give the Scrabble Hill wimmin fits to see ye with that on?"

"Well, I'll take it. See, how much do I owe ye now?"

"But can't I sell ye any thin' else?"

XII.

The Widow and Aunt Maguire Discourse on Various Topics.

"I SAY, sister Magwire—this ere 's a miserable mean kind of a world, for I 've—"

"I don't agree with you, Silly. I think it 's a very good sort of a world if a body looks at in a right point o' view. Most o' folks in it used *me* well, and I guess they 'll continner to dew so as long as I use *them* well. For my part I 'm satisfied with the world ginerally speakin."

"Well, s'pozen ye be, that 's no sign 't every body else had ought to be satisfied with it. You was always a wonderful satisfied critter. You think every body 's dretful nice and dretful clever."

"Now sister Bedott you *know* that ain't so—you know ther 's some folks 't I 've got a turrible mean opinion of."

"I know ther *is* a few 't ye don't like—but I mean as a gineral thing you seem to think the most o' folks is jest about right. For my part, I 'd ruther see things

as they actilly be. I shouldent want to be so *awful* contented."

"I should think so—for you ain't never contented only when you 've got some thing to be *discontented* about."

"Well, if that 's the case, I 'd ought to be contented the heft o' the time, for my trouble is continniwal."

"How you talk, sister Bedott! I thought you hadent nothing to complain of now-a-days. I know 't along after your husband died you wus in ruther poor circumstances and used to grumble a good deal—but seems to me you 'd ought to be contented and thankful now. Yer children's growd up to be blessins tew ye, and now they 're both settled and dewin fust rate. And sence fatner was took away, and the property was divided, you 've had enough to keep ye comfortable, and more tew."

"O lawful sakes! I dident mean 't I was *poverty struck*. Ther 's other kinds o' trouble besides *that*—ain't thar? If you 'd a ben in Wiggletown durin' the last few years, and seen how every body was a peckin' at me, and a tryin' to put me down, you 'd a thought I had *somethin'* to try me. You wouldent jaw me for thinkin' the world 's a dretful mean place—full o' dretful queer folks."

"O dear suz! Some folks is always a talkin' about other folks' bein' queer, while, like enough, it 's themselves that 's queer, after all."

"I hope ye don't mean to insinniwate 't *I'm* queer, Melissy."

"O no, Silly. I dident mean to insinniwate *that*—but then ye know almost every body has ther queer streaks."

"Yes—I know it 's a pecooliarity natral to every body to be queer about *some* things—but then some folks *is* queerer 'n others."

"Jest so, Silly—some folks is *actilly* queer—and some folks *thinks* some other folks queer 'cause they don't happen to think jist as they dew on some pints. *We* think some indiwiddiwals is queer cause they differ from us, and mabbe they think *we're* queer cause we differ from *them*. We 'd ought to be carful how we call other folks queer, for the fact is we 're all queer more or less—and them that lives in glass houses mustent throw stuns."

"I wa'n't a throwin' stuns as I know on when I said 't was a queer world—for 't is—specially that part on't called Wiggletown. Scrabble Hill don't seem to be such a sort of a place at all, as fur as I 'm able to judge. I think the inhabbiters is quite intellectible, as a gineral thing—and oncommon perlite, tew. I 'm quite pleased with the Scrabble Hill folks. There 's Dr. Lippincott—he 's quite a science man, I should think, from the way he talks."

"Mabbe he is—can't say—for I can't understand much o' what he says, he talks so big."

"I shouldent wonder if *you* couldent—but that ain't no sign nobody can't. I was quite pleased with him, and his wife, tew—they seemed so friendly—took *such* an interest in my health, and was *so* consarned about my cough that night they called on me."

"Yes—I guess they 've got an idee your a rich widder, livin' on the interest o' yer money—husband says ther 's such a story 'round—shouldent wonder if husband started it himself, jist to see what would be the effect on 't."

"I shouldent nother, he 's so full o' mischief—but you don't s'pose that 's what makes the Peabodys, and the Buels, and the Fusticks, and the Hugles so perlite tew me, dew ye?"

"O I ain't no rite to say 't is—I 'm sure I 'm glad they 're so attentive—it 'll make yer visit pleasanter."

"Jest so—seems to me Miss Deacon Fustick 's a sing'lar woman—she seems to be intirely took up with the 'anti-tea-and-coffee society'—talked to me all the time she was here about it—said I might depend on 't that all that made me so thin, and have such a cough, was drinkin' tea and coffee. If she runs me so every time I see her I guess I shall keep clear on her—for I won't give up my tea and coffee for her nor nobody else."

"O lawful sakes! Ye needent be afeard o' that—she 'll be on to something new afore long. She takes up every thing that comes along, and gits all engaged

about it. A spell ago she was wide awake against Sabbath-breakin', and dident talk about nothin else—then 't was moral reform—next come Millerism—"

"Now that makes me think of old mother Green in Wiggletown. You remember old Jabe Green 's wife!—she was always jest so carried away with every new thing, ye know. Tew or three years ago, when Millerism was makin' such a noise, ther was a feller along lecturin' about it—and a number o' the Wiggletown folks raly thought ther was something in it. But old Miss Green was clear killed up with it. She give up all bizness, and dident dew nothin' but traipse round from house to house a takin' on about the eend o' the world—'t was a comin' afore long. Well—one day she come into Sam Pendergrasses—'t was afore old Miss Pendergrass, Sam's mother, died. She was a livin' with 'em—and ye know she was a woman that always minded her own bizness. Well—she sot ther at her loom a weavin' away—she was a great hand to weave, the old lady was. Sam's wife was a settin' there tew—'t was Sam's wife told me about it. Well—Miss Green she sot down in the rockin' cheer, with her face half a yard long, an she hauled out her snuff-box (she was an all-to-pieces snuff-taker ye know) and she begun to snuff and rock, and rock and snuff, as hard as ever she could, and every once in a while she 'd heave a turrible sythe. Byme-by says she, 'Miss Pendergrass, do you expect to finish that web?'

'Well, I ruther guess I shall,' says the old lady, says she, 'if I live.' 'If you *live*,' says Miss Green, 'that 's the pint—for my part I 've sot my house in order, and I 'm ready to go any minnit, and I wish you could say the same. It 's raly a moloncolly sight to see you so occupied with the consarns o' this world that 's jest a comin' to and eend. I don't see how you *can* set there a weavin' a piece o' cloth when the day o' the Lord 's so nigh at hand,' and she took a normous pinch o' snuff, and gi'n a dretful groan. 'Well,' says old Miss Pendergrass, says she, 'I 'm glad you feel so sartin about yer condition—I 'd as lieve the Lord would find me a weavin' cloth as a *takin' snuff*.'"

"Well, that was a good un! It ought to stopped the old woman's mouth and sot her a thinkin'. Miss Fustick *is* some such a woman in some respects."

"I was pleased to hear Cappen Smalley take up agin her in favor o' tea and coffee, t' other night, in to Miss Grimes's. By the way, Cappen Smalley 's quite an intellectible man, ain't he?"

"Why, yes—he *knows* enough. It kind o' strikes me he 's a steppin' up to Charity—seems to go there considerable."

"You don't! Well ther 's no accountin' for tastes, I *dew* say. I should a took the cappen for a man o' better judgment than to be pleased with such a critter Don't you think she 's awful dizagreeable?"

"Well, I must say I don't admire her no great."

"And then she 's so awful humbly tew. What a draw up nose she 's got! And she 's so turribly affected and stuck up. I took a dislike tew her the first time I ever see her—when she come in here with her mother. The widder 's a skew-jawed oncomfortable lookin' old critter, ain't she?"

"Yes—and no wonder, for she 's tew stingy to *feel* comfortable, and of course she can't *look* so. You was sayin', a spell ago, that I thought every body was dretful nice, and dretful clever, and I told ye ther was some folks I had a turrible mean opinion of—well, the Widder Grimes is one on 'em—she 's the meanest woman in the neighborhood."

"Is, hay! Well I reckoned whether or no she wa'n't when I seen her."

"And Charity 's a chip o' the old block. They git their livin' by visitin' and borrerin'. They keep that little black girl o' theirn on a trot the heft o' the time —runnin' after *a little piece* o' butter here, a half a loaf o' bread there, and a little o' this that and t' other in another place—and they ain't everlastin' partickler about payin'. They borrer a good deal o' me, and I gnerally let 'em have it. 'T ain't much they ax for at once, and I hate to refuse when I 've got it in the house. They send every few days for a slice or tew of bread, and so it goes on for some time—till what they 've got amounts to mabbe, half a dozen loaves—and then the little nigger comes in with a loaf o' bread,

and says she, 'Missy Grimes sends this loaf o' bread and wants Missy Magwire to *take off what's right.* The last time she sent hum bread in that way—only a few days ago—husband was in—I took the loaf and was a gwine to cut off a piece as usual—but husband laid his hand on my arm, and says he, 'Stop, Melissy—don't you cut that—here, *Snowball*, take it hum and tell Miss Grimes 't wouldent be *right* to take off *none on 't.*' I don't know whether they took the hint—time 'll show. But I got rid o' ther borrerin' coffee the slickest—or ruther husband did—'t was his dew-ins. They used to send about once a week after coffee—and once in a while they 'd send hum a cup full, ready ground—and of all things! such miserable stuff I never laid my mouth tew! 't was as black as dirt. I biled some on 't once or twice, and then I gin it up—for husband nor Jeff wouldent nary one on 'em touch it—they declared 't wa'n't nothin' but burnt bread-crusts. At last, one day when Miss Grimes sent hum some coffee, husband happened to be in. After the nigger 'd gone he says to me, says he, 'Now, Melissy, you save that coffee, and the next time Miss Grimes sends to borrer, jest give it tew her.' Well, 't want long afore they sent agin. Dianny come in with her cup and said Missy Grimes had company come onexpected, and hadent no coffee burnt, and wanted to git a little. So I goes to the cubberd and fetches out the same old stuff and gives it tew her.

I tell ye I felt ruther mean when I gi'n it tew her, but then I 'd promised husband I would, and besides, I kind o' wanted to see how 't would operate. That was three months ago, and they hain't sent for coffee sence."

"Well that was about the cutest thing I ever heerd o' your dewin, Melissy. You sarved 'em right. But ain't it curus 't Cappen Smalley should be pleased with Charity? wonder if he knows how mean they be?"

"If he did 't would be a recommendation tew him."

"What! Cappen Smalley ain't a tight man, is he?"

"Tight! yes, tight as the skin tew his back."

"Well, now, I *am* beat! Why how oncommon good and ginerous he talked t' other night, when he come in to Parson Tuttle 's, when we was there to tea —seemed to be so ingaged in every menevolent operation.'

"Yes, he 's famous for wishin' 't every body might be warmed and clothed; but somehow or another he never *hands over*. Whenever any body goes tew him with a subscription-paper, he always seems highly delighted with it—says it 's an excellent objick—an objick he feels wonderfully interested in—he *does* hope they 'll succeed in raisin' enough for 't—'t would be *shameful* if they dident. But he 'd ruther not put his name down—he has an aversion to makin' a display—he wishes they 'd go all round and raise what they can, and if they don't git enough, come to him,

and he 'll *make up what 's lackin'*. Somehow or another it don't often happen 't he 's called on to make up what 's lackin': when he *is*, he 's generally missin'. Parson Tuttle don't seem to see through him yet—he thinks he 's a wonderful charitable man."

"Speakin' o' Parson Tuttle—seems to me he ain't very *deep*."

"O, Parson Tuttle 's considerable of a man; he 's young yet, but I think he 's got a good deal o' staminy in him. He 'll improve as he grows older."

"Well, whether he improves or not, it 's my opinion he won't never be able to hold a candle to Elder Sniffles."

"Granf'ther grievous! you ain't in airnest, Silly?"

"I be tew. I think Elder Sniffles is equil to Parson Potter."

"Well, I 'll give it up now. I always thought the elder was ruther of a dough-head."

"Nothin' but prejudice, Melissy—nothin' in the world but prejudice, 'cause he happens to belong to a different seck from yourn—'t ain't right to be so set in yer way."

"Deary me, Silly! seems to me you 're got to be wonderful forbearin', lately; you used to blaze away about the Baptists turribly."

"I know I dident use to like 'em much, but 't was 'cause I dident know much about 'em, and husband you know, couldent bear 'em."

"Well, I disremember about that; but I *dew* remember o' hearin' you blow him up once for gwine to Baptist meetin'."

"Well, I say for 't, your memory 's wonderful good—considerable better 'n mine. Any how—s'posen a body *does* dislike a sartin seck, and express ther sentiments agin 'em—is that any reason why they should ent be open to conviction, and alter ther minds consarnin' em?"

"To be sure not—but it does seem queer to me 't you should be so eat up with Elder Sniffles, when you hain't heerd him preach but once: but he 's widdiwer now, and I s'pose *that* makes his preachin' a good deal interestiner. Shouldent wonder if you 'd heerd he 'd lost his wife, afore you went to his meetin'—hadent ye? now, Silly, own up."

"Melissy Magwire! I should like to know what you mean to insinniwate. If I take a notion to go to Baptist meetin' or any other meetin', I got a right to dew it, and I *will* dew it as much as I 'm a mind tew, and if my motives is impunged, I can't help it—that 's all."

Enter Mr. Maguire—"What ye jawin', about, now?"

"We wa'n't a jawin', was we, sister Bedott? we was only discussin'."

"Cussin', hey? well, then, what was ye *cussin* about?"

"What a critter you be to misunderstand! I did

ent say *cussin'*, but *dis*cussin'. We was discussin' Elder Sniffles—ye know Silly thinks he 's something supernatral."

"Haw! haw! haw! what if Silly should git to be a Baptist! wouldent it be a joke, though? But look here, Silly, you must be carful how ye set yer traps for the elder—it might be dangerous to interfere with Sally Hugle's pretensions. Don't ye s'pose wife, that Sally 's ruther a squintin' that way?"

"Well, I shouldent wonder if she was; I don't s'pose she 'd have any *serus* objections to changin' her condition. That are piece of poitry o' hern, that cum out in the paper last week, looked ruther *pinted*, dident it?"

"What! sister Magwire, you don't mean to say 't Sally Hugle writes poitry?"

"Lawful sakes, yes! she writes bushels on 't—curus kind o' poitry, tew. Ther 's some on 't comes out almost every week in the 'Scrabble Hill Luminary She signs it 'Hugeliner.' She generally calls 'em '*sunnets*'—Jeff says they ought to be called *moonets*, cause they 're always full o' stuff about the moon and stars, and so on. She 's always groanin' away about her *inward griefs*, and *unknown miseries*. I don't know what to make on 't. Sally Hugle never had no partickler trouble as I know on—without 't was her not bein able to ketch a husband."

"See, wife—what was that she writ on the death of

Elder Sniffleses wife? can't you remember some on 't. I thought *that* was about as *rich* as any thing o' hern I'd seen."

"Lemme see. I'm sure I'd ought to remember it; for Jeff had it over all the time for about a week—a singin' it through his nose to the tune o' 'Saint Martins'—that goes shakin' up and down ye know, kind o' sollem. Less see—seems to me this was the way it begun.—

'As droops the pale effulgent flower.
By wintry breezes tried—
So, in an onexpected hour,
Dear Miasis Sniffles died.'

Now what comes next? Oh, I remember—

'No more her sorrowin' pardner hears
The voice he loved below—
While tears, unmitigated tears,
Reveal his bosom's woe.

In that respect such grief as hisen
Is different from my own,
Which, in my heart's dark mournful prison,
Lies rankin' unbeknown.'

"Ther s more on 't, but I forgit what 't is."

"That 's enough any way, wife—what do ye think on 't, sister Bedott—s'pose ye could beat it?"

"I should be sorry if I couldent—why I could make better poitry 'n that by throwin' an inkstand at a sheet o' paper. I wonder if she expects the elder 'll be took with such stuff. If he is, I 'm mistaken."

"S'pose you take hold, then, and see if ye can't

write her down—wouldent it be a capital idee, wife, for Silly to write a piece o' poitry to the elder, and have it printed in the 'Luminary.' Come on, Silly—that you writ on Miss Crane's death was very *touchin'*, though it dident seem to *touch* Mr. Crane much."

"Brother Magwire, I look upon 't as an insult, to have old Crane's name mentioned in my hearin'—considerin' all the lies that 's told about him and me, and all the trouble his disagreeable attentions gin me—and I hope in futur you 'll keep silent on that onpleasant subjick."

"I beg yer pardon, sister Bedott. I forgot you was so sore on that pint. But I 'm in arnest about that poitry. Why not try, and see if you can't beat 'Hugeliner' all holler."

"Seems to me you 're changed yer mind about my poitry; you used to turn up yer nose at it."

"O, well, my taste improves as I git older. I admire poitry more 'n I used to."

"Well, I 'll show you some varses I writ a spell ago on the Mexican War—and see what you think on 'em." (She goes to bring them, and Mrs. Maguire remarks—)

"Now, Joshaway, ain't you ashamed o' yerself! You 'd ought to know better 'n to go to puttin' Silly up to writin' poitry—first we know she 'll be a sendin' some of her stuff to the 'Luminary,' and it 'll make *her* ridickilous, and us tew."

"Don't fret your gizzard, Melissy. Nobody won't think nothing she does is ridickilous—for ye know its ginerally thought she 's a rich widder, and every body 'll be ready to swaller her poitry—I don't care if it 's the tarnalest mess o stuff that ever was put together."

XIII.

The Widow having Heard that Elder Sniffles is Sick, Writes to Him.

Dear Elder:

I DON'T know but what you 'll consider it ruther forrard in me to trouble you with this epistol, bein' as I 'me a' most a strainger; but I hope youle overlook my appearent want of judition, and attribit this communication to the oncommon interest I take in your welfare. Sence the first time I heerd you preach, I've had had an undescriberble desire to hev some privit conversation with you, in regard to the state o' my mind—your discourse was so wonderful searchin' that I felt to mourn over my backslidden state o' stewpidity, and my consarn has increased every time I've sot under the droppin's o' your sanctuery. Last night when I heerd o' your sickness, I felt wonderful overcome; onable to conseal my aggitation, I retired to my chamber, and bust into a flood o' tears. I felt for you, Elder Sniffles—I felt for you I was wonderful exercised in view of your lone condition. O, it 's a terrible thing to be alone in the world! I know

all about it by experience, for I've ben pardnerless for nigh twelve year; it's a tryin' thing, but I thought 't was better to be alone than to run enny resk—for you know it's runnin' a grate resk to take a second companion, espeshelly if they ain't decidedly pious—and them that's tried to perswade me to change my condition, dident none on 'em give very satisfactory evidence of pioty—'t ain't for me to say how menny I've refused on account o' ther want o' religion. Accordin' to my notions, riches and grander ain't to be compaired to religion, no how you can fix it, and I always told em so. But I was a tellin' how overcome I was when I heerd o' your bein' attackted with influenzy. I felt as if I must go right over and take care of you. I wouldent desire no better intertainment than to nuss you up, and if 't wa'n't for the speech o' peeple, I'd fly to your relefe instanter; but I know 't would make talk, and so I feel necessiated to stay away. But I felt so consarned about you, that I couldent help writin' these few lines to let you know how anxious I be on your account, and to beg o' you to take care o' yerself. O, elder, do be careful—the influenzy 's a dangerous epedemic if you let it run on without attendin' to it in season. Do be kerful—consider what a terrible thing 't would be for you to be took away in the haight of yer usefulness; and O, elder, nobody wouldent feel yer loss with more intensitude than what I should, though mebby I hadent

ought to say so. O, Elder Sniffles, I feel as if I couldent part with you, no how. I 'me so interested in your preachin', and it 's had such a wonderful attendency to subdew my prejudices aginst your denomination, and has sot me a considerin' whether or no I wa'n't in the wrong. O, reverend elder, I intreat you to take case o' yer preshus helth. I send you herewith a paper o' boneset, you must make some good stiff tea out, and drink about a quart to-night afore you retire. Molasses and vinegar 's a good thing too for a cold or coff; jest take about a pint o' molasses and bile it down with a teacup of vinegar and a hunk o' butter as big as a hen's egg, and stir in about a half a teacup full of pepper sass, and eat it down hot jest afore bedtime—and take a strip o' flannil, and rub some hog's lard on 't, though goose ile 's about as good, and pin it round yer throte right off; and I send likewise a bag o' hops; you must dip it in bilin' vinegar, and lay it on yer chist when you go to bed, and keep a dippin' on 't as fast as it begins to git cool; and jest afore you git into bed, soke yer feet in bilin' hot water with some red peppers in it, now don't forgit nothin' I 've proscribed. But I was a tellin' how exercised I felt last night when I heard o' your sickness. I went immejitly to my chamber, and gin way to my grefe in a violent flood of tears. I retired to my couch o' repose, but my aggitation pervented my sleepin'. I felt quite a call to express

my feelin's in poitry—I 'me very apt to when enny thing comes over me—so I riz and lifted my candle, and composed these stanzys, which I hope will be agreeable to you.

O reverend sir, I do declare,
It drives me a' most to frenzy,
To think o' you a lyin' there
Down sick with influenzy.

A body 'd a thought it was enough
To mourn yer wife's departer,
Without such trubble as this 'ere
To come a follerin' arter.

But sickness and affliction is trials sent
By the will o' a wise creation,
And allways ought to be underwent
With fortytude and resignation.

Then mourn not for yer pardner's death
But to submit endevver;
For s'posen she hadent a died so soon,
She couldent a lived forever.

O, I could to your bedside fly,
And wipe yer weepin' eyes,
And try my best to cure you up,
If 't wouldent create surprise.

It 's a world o' trial we tarry in -
But elder, don't dispair;
That you may soon be movin' agin,
Is constantly my prayer.

Both sick and well, you may depend
Youle never be forgot,
By your faithful and affectionate friend,
PRISCILLA POOL BEDOTT.

P. S. My nefew, Jefferson Magwire. will hand you this epistol. I should be wonderful happified to re

ceve a few lines from you when you git able, jest to show whether or no you think me forrard in address-in' you in this manner. P. P. B.

P. S. Now do be cerful o' yerself, dear elder—excuse me for callin' you dear, it came out afore I was aware on 't—don't fail to foller my directions, espeshelly about the boneset; it 's the sovereinst cure in nature for influenzy—and be sure to soke yer feet in the hot water and peppers—ther ain't nothin' like it to fetch down infermation—and bind up yer throte in the iled flannel—it prevents swellin'—and I wouldent have you forgit to use the hop-bag, for nothin'—jest keep a pan o' hot vinegar on top o' yer stove, and dip the bag in it about once in ten minnits, all night—it 'll give you such a good night's rest—hops is sleepyfyin'. Committin' you to the care o' creation, and hopin' youle be about agin in a few days, I sine myself yourn, with consarn,

P. P. Bedott.

ELDER SNIFFLES' REPLY.

Most Worthy Mrs. Bedott:

Your communication of yesterday was duly received at the hand of your nephew. At the period of its reception, I was laboring under too great a degree of corporeal prostration to dictate an immediate response. But at present, feeling my physical con-

dition to be, to some extent, ameliorated, I hasten to respond. Accept my most unqualified acknowledgments for the interest which you apparently take in my welfare—and for the articles which you so kindly transmitted by your nephew. Permit me, also, to assure you of my abundant gratification at the assurance that my unpretending discourses have been the feeble instrument of exerting a salutary influence upon your mind. I feel, most deeply do I feel, that I am but a poor unworthy worm of the dust; and it serves but to augment my humiliation to reflect that my labors in the field have been so signally blessed. Your remedies, most excellent madam, I have applied in accordance with your directions; and it affords me no inconsiderable satisfaction to be able to say that I think I can safely affirm that their effects upon my system have been salubrious; and I can but indulge the hope that they will tend to my ultimate restoration. I must not, however, omit to mention, that I did not realize, to the full extent, the efficacy of the hop-bag; for after having arisen agreeably to your directions, some five or six times (it may be seven, I will not venture to speak positively as to the number) and immersed the hop-bag in the boiling vinegar, I regret to say that I unintentionally fell into a state of unconsciousness, from which I unhappily did not awake until morning. Owing to this unfortunate occurrence, I probably did not enjoy the refreshing

repose which a constant application of the hot hop-bag would have afforded. However, notwithstanding this unintentional neglect, I am happy to state that the virulence of my attack is decidedly abated.

I acknowledge myself deeply indebted for the poem which accompanied your communication. It was truly gratifying to my feelings. Your remark therein embodied, that "we tarry in a world of trial," is a very just one—very, indeed. This is incontrovertibly a life of trials—of disappointments and fluctuations, sent, undoubtedly, for the fortification of our faith. It will afford me most unmitigated pleasure to converse with you privately, in regard to your mind, and to give you such instructions upon doctrinal points as may be necessary and conducive to your spiritual edification. With that view, I invite you to call at my residence on Friday evening next, when, if no unforeseen contingencies intervene to prevent, and my corporeal condition continues to improve, I shall be unoccupied and most happy to attend to your case, and enlighten you in relation to such inquiries as you may be pleased to propound.

With sentiments of unmitigated regard,

I remain your obliged friend,

O. SHADRACK SNIFFLES.

XIV.

The Widow Resorts to Elder Sniffles for Religious Instruction.

"WHERE you gwine, sister Bedott?"

"Well, I thought I 'd go to Parson Tuttle's Friday evenin' lectur."

"Why ther ain't none. Don't you remember Mr. Tuttle said last Sunday that he 'd got to be away to-day, and the lectur 'd be omitted?"

"O, sure enough—so he did. But come to think—don't you remember he said the brethern and sisters might meet and have a season o' prayer?"

"O, yes—he did says so. But lawful sakes! I don't think it 's very edifyin' to go set a hull evenin' and hear Deacon Fustick and Deacon Peabody and old Parker hold forth."

"Nor I nother. But then I think it 's my duty to go once in a while. Ye know Scripter says we mus n't forsake the assemblin' of ourselves together. I guess I 'll go tew night."

(She departs and proceeds to Elder Sniffles residence.)

"Good evenin', Elder Sniffles. You see I am punctable to the time. I always make it a pint to be. I think punctability 's very important."

"A very just remark, Mrs. Bedott—it is so—and I am most happy to receive you this evening."

"Well, how 's your health now? Convalessin', I hope?"

"It affords me the most unmitigated satisfaction to be able to state that my corporeal system has, in a great measure, recovered its usual tone."

(With much fervor.) "O how thankful I be to hear you say so, Elder Sniffles. You can't have the remotest idee o' my anxiety on your account, and how delighted I feel to find you so much better, and I hope you 've recovered yer tone so 's to be able to sing agin. It 's a great blessin' to sing when a body has such a powerful voice as yourn. I 've obsarved it a Sabberdays in meetin'. O how oneasy I've been about you when I thought you might be took away, and me never hear you preach no more. I felt as if I couldent submit to 't no how. 'T was a dretful subjick o' retrospection to think o' your dessolucion. I was wonderful glad to git your letter, and know 't you dident think I 'd overtopt the bounds of propriety in writin' to you. I was *so* afeared you would. But I felt so consarned for fear you wouldent be comfortable and have such care as you 'd ought tew—livin' all alone so—noboay in the house but a little chore-gal—

and what does she know about taking care of a sick man?"

"O, Sally does very well. As a general thing she discharges the duties devolving upon her with fidelity and—"

"As fur as *you* know, undoubtedly—but 'tain't likely you know jest how things goes on. I never know'd a gal o' her age but what wanted watchin' every minnit. You can't trust 'em they 're such highty-tighty critters. And then the best on 'em wants a *head* to oversee 'em all the time—the very best on 'em can't dew for you as a pardner would. O, when an indiwiddiwal 's sick then 's the time they feel the want of a companion, and ministers is so apt to git sick, ye know."

"A very just remark, ma'am—very indeed. Our profession is arduous. I myself am the subject of frequent valetudinary attacks—the effects, undoubtedly, of intense application."

"Jest so. I remember Parson Potter, our minister in Wiggletown, used to have a great many poor turns, dispepshy-like—his vittals distresst him."

'He was a Presbyterian clergyman, I suppose."

'Yes. He labored in Wiggletown ten years. My husband was deacon all the time he was there. Died about a year after Parson Potter left there Husband used to have such attacks as yourn, tew. He enjoyed miserable health for a number o' year afore he died.

He was a feeble constitutioned man. I s'pose he wouldent a lived no wher nigh as long as he did if I hadent a ben undefateegable in takin' care of him. O, how I did watch that man! For six or seven years afore his dessolution I gi'n up my hull time tew him. The neighbors used to say, 'Miss Bedott, you'll sartinly wear yerself out takin' care o' the deacon.' 'Well,' says I, 'it 'll be in a good cause if I dew. I consider it a duty and a privilege to devote myself to my husband. I don't want no better occerpation.' And 't was a wonderful comfort tew me after his dizease, to think I *had* been so devoted. O elder, mine war a dretful loss! I've always felt as if t would be very difficult to make it up to me. My friends has wondered at me for continiwin single so long, but, as I obsarved in my letter, I always tol 'em 't was a very resky bisness to take a second pardner, very resky, indeed. Don't you think so, elder?"

"I do, indeed; the selection of a consort, either first or second, is a matter of immense importance, and involves consequences of tremendous magnitude. In my opinion, it—"

"I says to 'em, says I, when they was a teazin' me to git married agin, I says to 'em, says I, don't speak on 't, don't—I've had one o' best o' men for a pardner, and I lived in the greatest conjugial felicitude with him; and that 's the reason why I 'm so pertick

ler now—piety 's every thing—don't you think so, Elder Sniffles?"

"A very just remark, Mrs. Bedott—piety is every thing, truly. Your late consort was, undoubtedly, a pious individual; though, as you begin to perceive, being a Presbyterian, he must necessarily have held some views which undoubtedly were—were—"

"Yes—husband *was* ruther sot in his way, and that 's the reason why I never got inlightened on some pints—husband always thought every thing Parson Potter said was jest right; and Parson Potter was a wonderful prejudiced man. He writ a couple o' sarmons aginst the Baptists, and had 'em printed; and husband used to read 'em over and over again. Yes—'t ain't to be denied that husband was mistaken on some doctrinal pints—my mind has been wonderfully exercised about it lately."

"I should judge so from your letter; and I trust—"

"Ever sence the first time I heerd you preach, I 've felt oneasy; I says to my nephew Jefferson Magwire—(ye know he went with me to the meetin')—Jeff, says I, I feel as if I *must* hear Elder Sniffles converse. You see, Jeff had been a tellin' me afore we went what an interestin' preacher you was; but I 'd no idee I should be so much affected—mabby you obsarved I was quite overcome at one part o' the discourse; 't was when you dwelt upon the changeable natur of arthly happiness—the onsartinty of every thing—it

touched a tender pint. I thought how it applied tc my case—my circumstances is so changed—alone in the world—without a sympathizin' buzzom to lean on —nobody to take any pertickler intrest in me." [She covers her face with her handkerchief, and appears much agitated.]

"But, Mrs. Bedott, in this mundane sphere, we should endeavor to be prepared for the innumerable fluctuations which—"

"I 'm aware on 't, Elder Sniffles—I 'm intirely aware o' the truth o' what you obsarve; but then you know an indiwiddiwal in my sittiwation has so many onpleasat things to incounter; if they 're ever so kerful, folks *will* talk and say they 're a gwine to change ther condition—and be all the time a pickin' out this one and that one for 'em—when they hain't no more idee o' changin' ther condition than they have o' flyin'. And then ther 's another dretful trial we have to undergo; dew what we will, we can't git red o' the impartinent attentions o' the men folks. If we 're ever so stiff and haughty tew 'em, they won't seem to mind it a speck; they *will* keep a makin' up tew us—and you 've no idee how dizagreeable 't is—'t was the principal cause o' my leavin' Wiggletown. As long as my son and darter was with me, I felt as if 't was my duty to stay there—but when they got married and left me, it seemed as if I couldent stan' it no longer—not that I 've got any thing to say against the indi

widiwals that was pleased with me—'t wa'n't *their* fault that I wa'n't suited with ary one on 'em; but 't was very onpleasant to be the objick o' their preference, when I couldent recipperate none o' ther feelins—and was detarmined never to unite my destination to a person that was destitue o' religion. 'T was a tryin' sitiwation to be placad in: but dear me! it 's awful tryin' to be without a companion, as I remarked in some stanzys I was a writin' 't other day.

> What sittiwation *can* be wuss
> Than not to have nobody to care for *us!*
> Riches and honors that most folks prize,
> Ain't of no vally in my eyes
> In comparison with a congenial heart,
> In all our consarns to take a part;
> To recipperate all our buzzom's emotions,
> And to take the lead in our daily devotions.

"Ain't them your sentiments, elder?"

"They are so, Mrs. Bedott; the society of a congenial spirit is truly desirable. In particular, I consider congeniality of sentiments to be indispensable as regards religious opinions; and as you have expressed a desire to receive some instructions relating to doctrinal points—"

"Yes, I *have* felt very much exercised lately. I 've felt to deplore my lukewarmness and want o' zeal, but especially I 've felt to mourn over my former prejudices against your seck: but you see I 've always ben placed under onfortinate circumstences—circumstences that 's had an attendency to exart an onfavorable in

fluence on my religious faith; and it actilly seems as if the hand o' Providence was in my comin' here to Scrabble Hill, instid o' concludin' to go to Varmount to my brother, Christopher Columbus Poole's. They wanted I should come there, but somehow another I felt a loud call to come here. I speak on 't in another stanzy o' the same poem I illuded tew jest now. I says, says I—

> Yes, sartin there was a providence in it,
> And I shall always bless the minnit
> That fixed my choice on Scrabble Hill,
> Instid o' the town o' Buttonville—

S'posen I 'd a went to Buttonville, and stayed all winter, instid o' comin' here—how different my circumstences would a ben. O, Elder Sniffles, what a privilege 't is to set Sabberday after Sabberday under your preachin', and to be permitted to come to yer house and injoy the benefit o' hearin' you convarse on religious subjicks. I dew feel as if I couldent be thankful enough. The day you was t' our house to dinner, I was wonderfully interested in yer conversation. I s'pose you obsarved I was ruther tackciturn most o' the time—'t was cause I felt under considerable constraint. Sister Magwire and her husband is very well meanin' folks, but they 're dretful narrer minded and sot in ther way. I don't never feel free to express my mind afore 'em as I 'd like tew—you know a body can't when they 're so sittiwated—"

"Exactly—a very just remark—in order to enjoy the entire benefit of intellectual or religious discourse, an individual must be wholly unrestrained. The present occasion, therefore, is one suited to—"

"Yes, felt *so* gratified when I got your letter and invitation to come round here to-night. O, thinks me, what a blessid privilege 't is—I dew hope I 'preciate it—but O, elder, elder, what if it should git out that I come here alone, and in the evenin'! What *would* some folks say? You know ther 's so many that 's ready to ketch up every little thing, and make the most on 't. Gracious sakes alive! what *should* I dew if the story should get round that I was settin' my cap for you! and I know 't would if Sally Hugle should find out I come here to-night—they say she 's a dretful meddlin' critter, and I 'm sure she don't feel none o' the frenliest to me; I s'pose it 's cause I hain't shewed no great anxiety to cultivate her society. The fact is the minnit I first set my eyes on her, I made up my mind she wa'n't a person I cared about havin' for an intimit: her countenance is so dizagreeable. I should know she had an onpleasant disposition; thinks me she 's got *grit* and no mistake. Brother Magwire says he should pity any man that would be draw'd in by her, cause she 's so lazy. They say when she ain't a spinnin' street yarn, she don't dew nothin' but write poitry; her mother and sister Polly has the hull heft o' the housekeepin' on their shoulders. Now I say

ther ain't no need o' neglectin' yer duties to write poitry: for I 've writ a sight on 't in my day—enough, I should say, to fill a bushel basket—and nobody can't say 't I ever allowed it to interfere with my domestic consarns. A body can write poitry and be industrous tew. And massy on me! such poitry as hern! did you ever!—but 't ain't for me to crittycise other folkses writin's, nor I don't want to say nothin' deroggery to Sally Hugle—only I *dew* hope she never 'll find out about my comin' here. O, Elder Sniffles, I 'm a lone woman; ther ain't nobody to stan' up for my rights, if the voice o' slander should be raised aginst me." [She weeps.]

"Be calm, Mrs. Bedott—[he approaches and sits down beside her]—permit me to assure you that your apprehensions are utterly groundless. You are quite too sensitive—quite. It is no unusual circumstance for individuals of your sex to resort to me for religious instruction and private conversation in regard to the state of their minds."

"Does Sally Hugle ever come for private conversation?"

"I believe—indeed it strikes me that Miss Hugle has done so once or twice."

"O, Elder Sniffles, beware of that critter. Depend on 't 't ain't for the sake o' gittin instruction she comes. It 's jist for to insiniwate herself into your favor—and judgin' from what I 've seen and heerd of her, I

shouldent wish my worst innemy a greater cuss than to git her for a pardner. Old maids always makes miserable wives—and of all things, to think o' such a person as Sally Hugie bein' united to a man like Elder Sniffles! A man that ought to have the very salt of the arth for a companion. O, its awful! 'T would put an eend to your usefulness, depend on 't."

"Compose yourself, my dear madam. Your fears are unfounded. The interest which you take in my welfare touches me deeply. If the period should ever arrive when I shall deem it essential to select a second consort, believe me, I shall—"

"O, Elder Sniffles!"

"I shall proceed with the utmost caution and prudence."

[A hurried knock is heard at the door.]

"There! some body 's a comin'. I must go."

"Well, allow me to entreat you to lay aside all apprehensions, and resort to me whenever you wish to unburden your mind, or receive religious instruction."

"I 'm very much obleeged to ye, Elder Sniffles, very much, indeed. I feel as if your conversation this evenin' had done me a great deal o' good."

XV.

The Widow Concludes to Publish.

"SEE here, Aunt Bedott, here's another poem by Hugelina."

"Is, hey? What's she groanin' about now? bewitched to die yet?"

"No—it seems to be a sort of lament occasioned by Elder Sniffle's sickness."

"You don't! now what a bare-faced critter she is to come right out so in the face and eyes of all creation—ain't it astonishin'? She's purty late in the day tew with her lamentin'—the elder's got about agin—preached last Sabberday."

"Yes; but you know he was laid up Sunday before last—and I suppose they dident get the poetry in time to bring it out last week."

"Well dew read it, for pity's sake—I want to hear what the critter says."

SONNET.

O, lyre of mine, divulge thy saddest strain
In melancholy thunder-tones of woe!
In gloomiest accents deep of quivering pain,
Thy mournful numbers on the midmight throw;
A direful theme demands thy anguished flow;

For sighing on his lonely couch of grief,
Truth's champion languisheth without relief!
Yon vacant, voiceless desk proclaims aloud
The absence of his eloquential tongue,
Which held in wondering chains the admiring crowd
And carried conviction both to old and young.
The arduous duties of his sacred calling
Have caused this casuallity appalling,
While in dark weeds of crape my wailing lyre is hung!

HUGELINA.

"Well now, if that don't beat all! did you ever see any thing so redickilous in all your born days? you may talk as much as you 're a mind tew about 'hidden meanin'.' I believe if there 's any meanin' at all in a thing it 'll show out some wher—and for my part, I can't see a speck nor grain o' sense in that are piece. What on arth does the simpleton mean by blazin away so about her 'liar' and its 'thunder tones' and 'mournin' weeds,' and all that? I should think Elder Sniffles would feel insulted by such a mess o' stuff—shouldent you?"

"O, no, I dare say he 'll consider it quite complimentary; don't you see she talks about his eloquence—drawing admiring crowds, and so forth? I guess she means to catch the elder if she can; any how she seems to be making a dead set at him, and I should n't wonder if she should succeed."

"Well, if Sal Hugle ketches Elder Sniffles 'with such trash as that, I 'll give it up that 's all; but I don't bleve she will · he ain't so big a fool as to have the wool drawd over his eyes in that way."

"But you know she may possess other attractions besides her poetical talents."

"Other attractions! goody grievous! I wonder what they be! Of all created critters she 's the dizagreeablest I ever see, and so awfully humbly I shouldent think she could feel comfortable. I guess she s one o' them that s tew humbly to relish ther vittals. But for all that, I bleve she thinks she 's quite handsome. What a way she's got o' fixin' her hair—them great long stringlets a danglin' down her cheeks—her phizmahogany's narrer enough without 'em, I 'm sure. I met her yisterday as I was gwine to the store, and 't was as much as I could dew to keep from bustin' right out a laughin' in her face. She had on that are everlastin' red hood that shows the hull o' her face, and her curls was a streamin' down over the corners of her mouth, so 't a body 'd a ben pestered to tell how far round it went; and she was a salin' along like a goose in a mud puddle, with her great eyes a starin' straight at nothin'. She 's got a way o' lookin' as if she was gazin' into futewrity."

"That 's a mark of genius, you know—a sign that she lives in the shadowy regions of imagination—"

"Shaddery fiddle-stick?"

"She was probably composing a sonnet when you met her."

"Shoudent wonder if she was—she looked as if

she was occupied with somethin' despirit. Well, if I couldent make out better 'n she does, I 'd hang up my fiddle—that 's all!"

"Well, aunty, why don't you write some poetry for the 'Luminary?' come, suppose you try your hand at it—you 're *great* on poetry."

"O, I don't feel willin' to make myself so conspiciwus."

"O fudge! that 's nonsense—every one ought to be willing to exercise their gift, you know."

"Well, it does look reasonable, but your mar always discourages me about writin' poitry."

"What of that? father and I don't, and I 'm sure we 're quite as competent judges as mother is. Come now, if you 'll write a piece of poetry I 'll take it to the 'Luminary' to-morrow before I go back to Coonville. I know you can beat Hugelina. Mother need n't know any thing about it till it comes out, and then she can't help herself."

"Well, I don't know but what I will. I 've got a piece begun that I think 's about as good as any thin' I 've writ in some time. Mabby I 'll finish that off and send it."

"What 's the subject?"

"Well, it treats o' the onsartainty o' terrestrious things. 'T was occasioned by a remark in the first sarmon I ever heard Elder Sniffles preach. You know

he spoke o' our bein' onable to calkilate with any degree o' sartainty."

"O yes, I remember it very well; that would be a first-rate subject to write upon."

"I begin by alludin' to the elder's sarmon, and then I goes on to testify to the truth on 't by showin' how diffikilt 't is to make any kind o' calkilation about any thing, bein' as all things of a transiterry natur is so onsartin. But I 'll go get it and show it tew ye, and then you can see for yourself. Here 't is." (Jeff reads it.)

"That's capital, Aunt Silly. Send it by all means. I 'll copy it off in a larger hand, so that it can be read more easily. And what shall we call it? Suppose we entitle it "Can't Calculate."

"Well, I should think that would be very approbriate."

"On second thoughts, I guess we 'll just call it 'K. K.' —that stands for 'can't calculate,' you know—and there 'll be something striking and original about it, too."

"Jest so. Well, you may fix it out as you 're a mind to—but I 'll take it and add on a few more stanzys first."

"O no, you need n't, it 's plenty long enough—they don't like to print long articles."

"Don't, hey? Well, it seems as if 't wa'n't hardly long enough to pay a body for the trouble o' readin' on 't"

"Yes it is. It is n't so much the length of a poem as the excellence of it that folks look at, you know."

"Well, I don't know but you're right, though I remember how 't Zebidee Higgins used to write very long pieces. He writ a good deal for the 'Wiggletown Banner,' and when Minarvy Pike died he writ a piece on her death, and had it printed alone by itself on a big sheet o' paper, and sold 'em for a shillin' apiece. Ther was risin' a hundred varses on't. I remember when he was a carryin' 'em around to sell, he come t' our house, and husband bought one. When he see how long 't was, he says, says he to Zeb, 'Why, Zebidee, what was yer object in havin' on't so long?' Says Zeb, says he, 'Don't ye s'pose I wanted folks should git the worth o' their money?' But as I don't charge nothin' for this ere, 't ain't so much matter about its length, I s'pose. There, yer mar 's a comin', stick it away for pity's sake."

* * * * * * *

[Messrs. Gamble and Spratt, editors of the "Scrabble Hill Luminary," discuss the merits of the widow's poem.]

"See here, Gamble. What d'ye think! that hatchet-faced old woman down at Maguire's has sent us a piece o' poetry."

"The dogs she has! Well, I swow I *am* beat now. She looks as little like the votary of the muses as any body I ever saw. What for poetry is it?"

"I'll be bound if I know what to make of it, and so I told Jeff Maguire, who handed it in just now. Jeff says she 's quite an eccentric character, and I should think so by this. I don't know what 's best to do about it." [Gamble reads it.]

"Jupiter! that 's rich, ain't it?"

"Don't exactly like to reject it—don't want to make her mad—they say she 's rich as mud—livin' on the interest of her money. What *shall* we do with the thundering stuff?"

"Why, print it, to be sure. I'll write a puff for it. I 'm great on editorials, you know."

"Are you in earnest, Gamble?"

"Certainly I am. I think there 's more sense in it than there is in Miss Hugle's poetry, and you never hesitate at all about accepting any thing from her."

"But hers *sounds* big, you know, and half the folks in the world thinks that 's *poetry* whether ther 's any sense in it or not."

"I know it, but 'Hugelina' is the only poetical contributor we have, and she 's almost worn out. I 've puffed her and puffed her till I am almost tired of the business. I should like a change. There 's something decidedly new about this. You leave it to me, I 'll manage it. I confess you 're greater on politics, and so forth, than I am, but it takes *me* to do up the fine arts."

"Jeff seemed to be sorry not to find you in when

he came. I suppose he saw that I hesitated a little about taking it, and he knew you would n't—you 're both of you up to all sorts of deviltry—but he looked as serious as a parson. I 'll be hanged if I know whether he was in earnest about wishing us to publish this plaguy stuff or not."

"In earnest? of course he was. If he was n't, I am. I never interfere with your department, and you ought not to with mine. My voice is for the *old gal* —so, hurra for the 'Editor's comments.'"

"It affords us the most indubitable pleasure to be able to enrich our 'Poet's Corner' of this week's Luminary with a gem from the pen of a new contributor. The extreme simplicity of the diction presents a striking contrast to the more highly wrought and elaborate style of our own gifted 'Hugelina,' and strongly reminds one of the effusions of the early masters of English poesy, when the muse was in her pristine purity. All worshipers of the truthful—the pure—the earnest and the unadorned in poetry, will rejoice with us that a brighter day appears about to dawn upon our poetical horizon, and that the time is probably not far distant when nature shall assert her supremacy over art in the dominions of the muse. We hope to hear often from our fair correspondent."

K. K.—CAN'T CALCULATE.

What poor short-sighted worms we be—
For we can't calculate
With any sort of sartintee,
What is to be our fate.

These words Prissilla's heart did reach
And caused her tears to flow,
When first she heard the Elder preach
About six months ago.

How true it is what he did state,
And thus affected her,
That nobody can't calculate
What is a gwine to occur.

When we retire, can't calculate
But what afore the morn
Our housen will conflaggerate
And we be left forlorn.

Can't calculate when we come in
From ary neighborin' place,
Whether we 'll ever go out agin
To look on natur's face.

Can't calculate upon the weather,
It always changes so;
Hain't got no means of telling whether
It 's gwine to rain or snow.

Can't calculate with no precision
On naught beneath the sky;
And so I 've come to the decision,
That 'tain't worth while to try.

PRISSILLA

XVI.

The Widow Prepares to Receive Elder Sniffles on Thanksgiving-Day.

"SAY, sister Magwire, can't you spend time jest to come here a minnit and look at my caps. I want to ax you which I'd better wear to-day. I don't want to wear it to meetin', cause my bunnit would jam it all down—but I want to make up my mind aforehand about it so's not to lose no time when I git hum. Come quick, dew—the bell'll ring in a minnit. O, here ye be; well, now tell, which o' these caps is the becominest."

"Why, you've got a regiment on 'em seems to me."

"Yes; I'm well on't for caps—but the half on 'em was giv' tew me. Here's one, though, 't I made myself. I wore it to Kier's weddin'. How does it look?" (She puts it on.)

"Somehow, I don't like that much—it sticks up tew high on top: and then them yaller bows looks so kind o' *darin'*, and then them red artifishels is ruther *extensive*. I reckon you look better without artifishels."

"Well, lemme try on this ere; Melissy gin it tew me. I always thought 't was quite becomin'."

"Well, I don't agree with ye, Silly I think there 's tew much ribbin on 't—pink ribbin tew; don't you think pink ribbin 's a'most tew *young* for you?"

"O, dretful suz, Melissy! what foolish idees *you* 've got!—you 're always a takin' me to dew about dressin' *tew young*. What 's the use o' makin' an old woman o' myself afore I *be* one? But come to think, this *would* be ruther dressy for to-day, seein' the minister 's a comin'. See 'f ye like this ere any better—'t was a present from Sam Pendergrasses wife, not long afore I come away. I never wore it but once."

"Well I reckon that looks woss than the pink one --blue makes you look kind o' *squawy;* you 're rather dark complected; and blue 's a tryin color for dark skins."

"Well, I never thought I was so wonderful dark complected, I 'm sure. I wonder if this one 'll suit ye any better. Kier's wife gin it tew me. I hain't never wore it at all; thought I shouldent, 'cause it 's so turrible old-womanish and quakery. I fetcht it along, cause I thought mabby Seliny 'd be mad if I dident—but I don't see what on arth she meant by givin' me such a lookin' thing."

"Now, Silly, I don't see how you can talk so—for my part, I like that better 'n ary one you 've tried on That are white satin trimmin' looks so kind o' neat and plain. It 's a purty shape tew—comes down furder 'n the others onto yer face—and that 's an im-

provement, bein' as you 're ruther long-favored. I 'd wear that by all means, Silly."

"You would!—well now I *am* beat—why ther ain't a color about it but white."

"All the better for that; it 's enough ginteeler 'n them flambergasted blue and yaller things; and then the *elder* 's a comin', ye know."

"Jest so; well I guess I *will* wear it considerin'—"

"And yer black silk gownd and muslin under-handkercher—you look best in them of any thing you 've got."

"Well, I don't know but what I will—murder! there 's the bell, and I hain't begun to be ready; never mind, I won't dress till I git hum; this ere allipacker looks well enough to wear to meetin'. I 'll jest throw on my mankiller and bunnit—'t won't take me long; wish you could go Melissy—but I know ye can't and git dinner tew; the elder 's a gwine to preach in your meetin'-house, hey?—well, that looks brotherly; Baptists preach in your meetin'-house one year—and your minister preach in theirn the next—I like the idee. Is my bunnit on strait? This glass makes me look kind o' skew-jawed—never know whether my things is in decent order and reglar rotation or not, when I git 'em on. How does this ere scarf go? Where 's brother Magwire and Jeff, I wonder? How thoughtful 't was in Jeff to ax the elder here to dinner—he 'd a ben so lonesome to hum all alone. Melissy, I begin

to have considerable hopes o' Jeff—shouldent wonder if he should turn out quite a stiddy man after all. Here they come."

* * * * * *

"Elder Sniffles, let me give you another piece o' the turkey."

"I'm obleeged to you, Mr. Maguire; you probably recollect that I remarked in my discourse this morning, that individuals were too prone to indulge in an excessive indulgence in creature comforts on thanksgiving occasions. In view of the lamentable fact that the sin of gormandizing is carried to a sinful excess on this day, I, as a preacher of the Gospel, deem it my duty to be unusually abstemious on such occasions: nevertheless, considering the peculiar circumstances under which I am placed this day, I think I will waive objections and take another small portion of the turkey."

"That's right elder—what part will you take now?"

"Well, I'm not particular; a small quantity of the breast, with a part of a leg and some of the stuffing, will be quite sufficient."

"Pass the cramberries to Elder Sniffles, Jeff—elder; help yourself; wife give the elder some more o' the turnip sass and potater."

"Thank you, Mrs. Maguire. I am an advocate for a vegetable diet—and have always maintained that it

is more congenial to individuals of sedentary habits and intellectual pursuits like myself, than animal food."

"Jeff, my son, pass the bread. Sister Bedott send your plate for some more o' the turkey."

"No, I 'm obleeged to ye—I 've had sufficient."

"Jeff, cut the chicken pie."

"Sure enough—I almost forgot that I was to carve the pie—Aunt Silly you 'll take a piece of it, won't you?"

"Well, I don't care if I dew take a leetle mite on 't. I 'm a great favoryte o' chicken pie—always thought 't was a delightful beverage—don't you Elder Sniffles?"

"A very just remark, Mrs. Bedott—very indeed; chicken pie is truly a very desirable article of food."

"Allow me to help you to some of it, elder."

"Thank you, my young friend; as I before remarked, I am entirely opposed to an immoderate indulgence of the appetite at *all* times, but particularly on thanksgiving occasions—and am myself *always* somewhat abstemious. However, I consider it my duty at the present time to depart, to some extent, from the usual simplicity of my diet. I will, therefore comply with your request and partake of the chicken pie."

"Take some more o' the cramberry sass, elder: cramberries is hulsome."

"A very just remark, Mrs. Maguire—they are so,

nevertheless, I maintain that we should not indulge too freely in even the most wholesome of creature comforts; however, since you desire it, I will take a small portion more of the cranberries."

"Husband, dew pass that pickled tongue—it hain't been touched—take some on 't Elder Sniffles."

"I 'm obliged to you, Mrs. Maguire—but I confess I am somewhat fearful of taking articles of that description upon my stomach, as they create a degree of acidity which is incompatible with digestion. Is it not so my young friend? You are undoubtedly prepared to decide, as you are, I believe, pursuing the study of the medical science."

"I think you are altogether mistaken, Elder Sniffles. We should always take a due proportion of acid with our food, in order to preserve the equilibrium of the internal economy, and produce that degree of effervescence which is necessary to a healthy secretion."

"Exactly. Your views of the subject is one which never struck me before; it seems a very just one. I will partake of the pickled tongue in consideration of your remarks."

"Take a slice on 't, Sister Bedott. You seem to need some tongue to-day—you 're oncommon still."

"What a musical man you be, brother Magwire! but it strikes me when an indiwiddiwal has an opportunity o' hearin' intellectible conversation they 'd bet-

ter keep still and improve it. Ain't it so, Elder Sniffles?"

"A very just remark, Mrs. Bedott; and one which has often occurred to my own mind."

"Take some more of the chicken pie, Elder Sniffles."

"Excuse me, my young friend; I will take nothing more."

"What! you dont't mean to give it up yet, I hope, elder."

'Indeed, Mr. Maguire, I assure you I would rather not take any thing more, for as I before remarked, I am decidedly opposed to excessive eating upon this day."

"Well, then, we'll have the pies and puddins. Jeff, my son, fly round and help your mar change the plates. I'll take the puddin, Melissy—you may tend to the pies. Jeff set on the cider. So here's a plum-puddin'—it looks nice—I guess you've had good-luck to-day wife. Sister Bedott, you'll have some on't?"

"No; I'm obleeged to ye. I've got ruther of a beadache to-day, and plum puddin's rich. I guess I'll take a small piece o' the punkin pie."

"Elder Sniffles, you'll be helped to some on't of course?"

"Indeed, Mr. Maguire, the practice of indulging in articles of this description after eating meat is esteemed highly pernicious, and I inwardly protest against

it; furthermore, as Mrs. Bedott has very justly remarked, plum pudding is rich—however, considering the peculiar circumstances of the occasion, I will for once overstep the boundaries which I have prescribed for myself."

"Am I to understand that you 'll have some, or not?"

"I will partake, in consideration of time and place."

"Jimmeni! wife, this is good puddin' as I ever eat."

"Elder Sniffles, will you take some o' the pie—here is a mince pie and punkin pie."

"I will take a small portion of the pumpkin pie if you please, Mrs. Maguire, as I consider it highly nutritious; but, as regards the mince pie, it is an article of food which I deem excessively deleterious to the constitution, inasmuch as it is composed of so great a variety of ingredients. I esteem it exceedingly difficult of digestion. Is it not so my young friend?"

"By no means, elder; quite the contrary—and the reason is obvious. Observe, elder—it is cut into the most minute particles; hence it naturally follows, that being, as it were, completely calcined before it enters the system—it leaves, so to speak, no labor to be performed by the digestive organs, and it is disposed of without the slightest difficulty."

"Ah, indeed! your reasoning is quite new to me—

Desist! Mrs. Maguire; desist, I entreat you! I invariably set my face like a flint against the use of all intoxicating drinks as a beverage.—PAGE 169.

yet I confess it to be most satisfactory and lucid. In consideration of its facility of digestion I will partake also of the mince pie."

"Wife, fill the elder a glass o' cider."

"Desist! Mrs. Maguire, desist, I entreat you! I invariably set my face like a flint against the use of all intoxicating liquors as a beverage."

"Jimmeni! you don't mean to call new cider an intoxicatin' liquor, I hope. Why, man alive, it 's jest made—hain't begun to work."

"Nevertheless, I believe it to be exceedingly insalubrious, and detrimental to the system. Is not that its nature, my young friend?"

"Far from it, elder—far from it. Reflect a moment and you will readily perceive, that being the pure juice of the apple—wholly free from all alcoholic mixture—it possesses all the nutritive properties of the fruit, with the advantage of being in a more condensed form, which at once renders it much more agreeable, and facilitates assimilation."

"Very reasonable—very reasonable, indeed. Mrs. Maguire you may fill my glass."

"Take another slice o' the puddin', Elder Sniffles."

"No more, I 'm obliged to you, Mr. Maguire."

"Well, won't you be helped to some more o' the pie?"

"No more, I thank you, Mr. Maguire."

"But you 'll take another glass o' cider, won't you?"

"In consideration of the nutritious properties of new cider, which your son has abundantly shown to exist, I will permit you to replenish my glass."

"So you won't take nothin' more, elder?"

"Nothing more, my friends—nothing more whatsoever—for as I have several times remarked during the repast, I am an individual of exceedingly abstemious habits—endeavoring to enforce by example that which I so strenuously enjoin by precept from the pulpit, to wit—temperance in all thing."

"Walk into the sitting room, elder. Mother 'll have to excuse us for a while. Aunt Bedott, you 'll give us your company, won't you?"

"Sartainly."

"Father, are you not coming?"

"Not now, Jeff. I've got to go out for a spell. I 'll try to be in soon."

"Take this arm-cheer by the stove, Elder Sniffles—the room 's got ruther cool; Jefferson, can't you accumelate the fire a little?"

"It strikes me very forcibly, Mrs. Bedott, that the weather is somewhat cool for the season of the year."

"So it strikes me tew; but I think this is quite a cool climit—appearently considerably cooler 'n Wiggletown."

"Why no, aunty—there can't be any difference in the climate—the latitude 's just the same."

"I guess not, Jeff—what *is* the latitude o' Scrabble Hill?"

"Oh, it 's about forty-two."

"Lawful sakes! our 'n in Wiggletown 's as much as fifty, and sometimes in the summer time it gits up as high as sixty or seventy."

"Ah! indeed! you surprise me, Mrs. Bedott. Speaking of Wiggletown—is that your place of residence?"

"It is so—the place where the heft o' my life has ben spent."

"In what section of the country is it located?"

"It's sitiwated between Ganderfield and Tuckertown, Slammerkin' crick runs along the south side on 't."

"Ah, yes, I comprehend; I think I have an indiscriminate recollection of the place. If I am not mistaken I journeyed through it some two years since, in company with my companion (now deceased), on a visit to her relatives in that section."

"H-o-o-o! how you talk! that journey must be a mellancolly subjick o' reflection now—how little you thought then that in tew year you 'd be called to mourn her departer! how onsartin' the futur is!"

"True—a very just remark, Mrs. Bedott, very, in deed—we are sojourners in a world of fluctuation!"

"O, Elder Sniffles—how true that is!"

"One moment tossed on the billows of prosperity and joy, and the next plunged into the abysses of desperation and despair."

"O, Elder Sniffles, what a strikin' remark; every word you say goes to the bottom o' my heart. I tew mourn the loss of a pardner, and bein' as we 're simi larly sittiwated, I feel as if we could sympathize with one another. You hain't no children—I've got tew, but they 're married and settled, and I 'm as good as alone in the world. It 's a tryin' sittiwation—very tryin'."

"It is *so*, Mrs. Bedott—your remark is a very just one —very, indeed—your situation is undoubtedly a trying one—but you are in easy circumstances, I believe?"

"Why, yes, ginerally speakin' I be purty easy, though sometimes I 'm ruther *on*easy when I think o' the futur—I was wonderfully struck with a remark in your sarmon this mornin'—it described my feelins so egzackly."

"Allow me to inquire what that remark was, Mrs. Bedott?"

[The conversation is here interrupted by the entrance of Mr. and Mrs. Maguire].

"Well, elder, how do you come on—time pass agreeably?"

"Most agreeably, Mr. Maguire, most agreeably, in conversation with Mrs. Bedott."

"Glad on 't—Jeff, here 's the last 'Luminary,' want it? I've read it purty much all, exceptin' the poetry."

"Does it contain a poem by 'Hugelina?' If so, permit me to request you to favor us with it, my young friend. She is indeed a most extraordinary writer."

"She is, that 's a fact—Jeff, less have it."

(Jeff reads)—"Those of our readers who are in any degree imbued with a love of the poetic—with an appreciation of the sublime and beautiful—will find a rich treat in the following exquisite lines from the pen of our highly gifted correspondent 'Hugelina.' Aside from the high degree of finish which her effusions always possess, the ensuing lines breathe a spirit of world-weariness and self abandonment exceedingly touching.

SONNET.

Oblivion! stretch thine everlasting wings,
And hide from human gaze my mournful lyre—
For while my earth-worn, weary spirit sings,
I frequently feel desirous to expire.
It is no vain and vanishing desire,
But a compulsatory wish that seems
To mingle nightly in my visioned dreams—
A wish to leave this uncongenial sphere,
Which souls like mine are apt to find so drear.
O for a residence in yonder orb
Which doth the affections of my soul absorb!
My spirit seeks in vain for sympathy here;
I feel as I have never felt before—
The one wild, withering wish—to die and be no more!

HUGELINA.

"A splendid production, truly—but does it not strike you Mrs. Maguire, that there is a slight degree of obscurity in the poem?"

"O don't ax me—I can't make head nor tail on 't—what's your opinion, Jefferson?"

"Well, I think that the obscurity of which Elder Sniffles complains constitutes the greatest beauty of the poem. Don't you know, elder, we are never deeply interested in any thing that we can comprehend at the first glance. There must be some mystery, some *hidden meaning* to excite at once our curiosity and admiration—Shakespeare himself often writes obscurely, you know."

"Shakespeare! that is an author that I am not conversant with. What does he principally treat of?"

"O, theology, and metaphysics, and so forth."

"Ah, yes, I recollect now—I think I have seen some of his sermons. On consideration, your reasoning in relation to the poem strikes me as quite conclusive. There should be—as you very justly remark—a hidden meaning to create an interest in any thing of that description."

"Well, then, that poitry must be awful interestin', for all the meanin' ther is in 't is *hid*, and no mistake—don't you say so, husband?"

"O, I ain't no judge o' poitry—ax sister Bedott, she knows all about poitry, writes bags on 't."

"Ah, indeed! is it true, Mrs. Bedott, that you cultivate the poetic art?"

"Well, *'t ain't for me to say*"

Full forty dollars would I give,
If we'd continnerd apart,
For though he's made my sperrit live,
He's surely bust my heart.

XVII.

The Widow retires to a Grove in the rear of Elder Sniffles' House.

SHE sits down on a log and sings in a plaintive voice,

Ere love had teached my tears to flow,
I was oncommon cherful,
But now such misery I dew know
I 'm always sad and ferful.

What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,
All on a summer's day!
But O, my comforts was destroyed,
When Shadrack crossed my way!

I heerd him preach—I heerd him pray—
I heerd him sweetly sing,
Dear suz! how I did feel that day!
It was a dretful thing!

Full forty dollars would I give,
If we 'd continnerd apart—
For though he 's made my sperrit live,
He 's surely bust my heart!

(She sighs profoundly—and the elder advances *unexpectedly.*)

"Good gracious! is that you, Elder Sniffles! how

you *did* scare me! Never was so flustrated in all the days o' my life! hadent the most remotest idee o' meetin *you* here—wouldent a come for forty dollars if I 'd a s'posed you ever meander'd here. I never was here afore—but I was a settin' by my winder and I cast my eyes over here, and as I obsarved the lofty trees a wavin' in the gentle blast, and heerd the feathered singsters a wobblin' their mellancolly music, I felt quite a call to come over, it 's so retired and morantic—such an approbriate place to marvel round in, ye know, when a body feels low sperrited and unconsolable, as I dew to-night. O, d-e-a-r!"

"Most worthy Mrs. Bedott, your evident depression fills me with unmitigated sympathy. Your feelings, (if I may be permitted to judge from the language of your song, which I overheard")—

"You dident though, elder! the dretful suz! what *shall* I dew! I wouldent a had you heerd that song for no money! I wish I hadent a come! I wish to gracious I hadent a come!"

"I assure you, Mrs. Bedott, it was unintentional on my part, entirely unintentional, but my contiguity to yourself, and your proximity to me, were such as rendered it impossible for me to avoid hearing you—"

"Well, it can't be helped now, it 's no use cryin' for spilt milk, but I wouldent hev you to think I know'd *you* ever come here."

"On the contrary, this grove is a favorite resort of

mine; it affords a congenial retreat after the exterminating and tremendous mental labors of the day. I not unfrequently spend the declining hours of the evening here, buried in the most profound meditation. On your entrance, I was occupying my customary seat beneath that umbrageous mounting ash which you perceive a few feet from you: indeed, had not your mind been much pre-occupied, you could scarcely have avoided discovering me."

"O, granf'ther grievous! I wish I 'd a stayed to hum! I was born for misfortin' and nothin' else! I wish to massy I 'd a stayed to hum to-night! but I felt as if I 'd like to come here once afore I leave the place." (She weeps.)

"Ah! indeed! do you project leaving Scrabble Hill?"

"Yes, I dew, I calklate to go next week. I *must* hear you preach once more—*once* more, elder, and then I 'm agwine—somewher—I don't care where, nor I don't care what becomes o' me when I git there." (She sobs violently.)

"O, Mrs. Bedott, you distress me beyond limitation—permit me to inquire the cause of this uncontrollable agony?"

"O, Elder Sniffles, you 're the last indiwiddiwal that ought to ax such a question. O, I *shall* die! I *shall* give it up!"

"Madam, my interest in your welfare is intense, al

low me to entreat you still more vehemently to unburden your mind, perhaps it is in my power to relieve you."

"Relieve me! what an idee! O, elder, you *will* be the death o' me if you make me revulge my feelins so. An hour ago, I felt as if I 'd a' died afore I 'd a said what I hev said now, but you ve draw'd it out o' me."

"Respected madam, you have as yet promulged nothing satisfactory, permit me—"

"O, granf'ther grievous! must I come to 't! well then, if I must, I must, so to begin at the beginnin'. When I fust heern you preach, your sarmons onsettled my faith; but after a spell I was convinced by yer argefyin', and gin up my 'roneus notions, and my mind got considerable carm. But how could I set Sabberday after Sabberday under the droppin's o' yer voice, and not begin to feel a mor 'n ordinary interest in the speaker? I indevored not tew, but I couldent help it; 't was in vain to struggle against the feelins that prepossest my buzzom. But it 's all over with me now! my felicitude is at an eend! my sittiwation is hopeless! I shall go back to Wiggletown next week and never truble you no more."

"Ah, Mrs. Bedott, you alarm—'

"Yes, you never 'll see no more trouble with Prissilly. I 'm agwine back to Wiggleton. Can't bear to go back there nother, on account o' the indiwiddiwals that I come away to git rid of. There 's Cappen

Canoot, he 's always been after me ever since my husband died, though I hain't never gin him no incurridgement—but he won't take no for an answer. I dread the critter's attentions. And Squire Bailey—he 's wonderful rich—but that ain't no recommendation to me, and I 've told him so time and agin, but I s'pose he thinks I 'll come round bumby. And Deacon Crosby, he lost his pardner a spell afore I come away, he was very much pleased with me, he 's a wonderful fine man—make a fust rate-husband. I kind o' hesitated when he promulgated his sentiments tew me, told him I 'd think on 't till I come back—s'pose he 'll be at me as soon as I git there. I hate to disappoint Deacon Crosby, he 's such a fine man, and my dezeased companion sot so much by him, but then I don't feel for him, as I dew for——. He 's a Presbyterian tew, and I don't think 't would be right to unite my desti nation to hisen."

"Undoubtedly in your present state of feeling, the uncongeniality would render a union—"

"O, dear, dear, dear! I can't bear to go back there and indure their attentions, but thank fortune, they won't bother me long—I shall go into a decline, I know I shall, as well as I want to know it. My troubles 'll soon be over—ondoubtedly they 'll put up a monnyment to my memory—I 've got the discription all ready for 't—it says,

Here sleeps Prissilly P. Bedott,
Late relie of Hezekier,
How mellancolly was her lot!
How soon she did expire!

She did n't commit self-suicide,
'T was tribbilation killed her,
O, what a pity she had n't a' died
Afore she saw the elder!—

And O, elder, you 'll visit my grave, won't ye, and shed tew or three tears over it? 'T would be a consolation tew me to think you would."

"In case I should ever have occasion to journey thro' that section of country, and could consistently with my arrangements make it convenient to tarry for a short time at Wiggletown, I assure you it would afford me much pleasure to visit your grave agreeably to your request."

"O, elder, how onfeelin'!"

"Unfeeling! did I not understand you correctly when I understood you to request me to visit your grave?"

"Yes, but I don't see how you can be so carm, when I 'm a talkin' about dyin'."

"I assure you, Mrs. Bedott, I had not the slightest intention of manifesting a want of feeling in my remark. I should regard your demise as a most deplorable event, and it would afford me no small degree of satisfaction to prevent so melancholy a catastrophe were it in my power."

"Well, I guess I'll go hum. If Sally should know you was here a talkin' with me, she'd make an awful fuss."

"Indeed, I see no reason to fear that my domestic should interfere in any of my proceedings."

"O, lawful sakes! how numb you be, elder! I dident illude to Sal Blake—I meant Sal Hugle, she't you're ingaged tew."

"Engaged to Miss Hugle! you alarm me, Mrs. Be—"

"Now don't undertake to deny it, elder; every body says it's a fact."

"Well then, it only remains for me to assert that every body is laboring under an entire and unmitigated mistake."

"You don't say so, elder! well, I declare I dew feel relieved. I couldent indure the idee o' stayin' here to see that match go off. She's so onworthy—so different from what your companion had ought to be—and so lazy—and makes such awful poitry; and then she hain't worth a cent in the world. But I don't want to say a word aginst her; for if you ain't ingaged now, mabby you will be. O, elder! promise me, dew promise me how't you won't marry that critter. 'T would be a consolation tew me when I'm fur away on my dyin' bed, to know—" [she weeps with renewed energy.] "O, elder, I'm afreard I'm a gwine to hev the highsterics I'm subjick to

spasmatic affections when I 'm excited and over come."

"You alarm me, Mrs. Bedott! I will hasten to the house, and bring the sal volatile, which may restore you."

"For the land's sake, elder, don't go after Sal; she can't dew nothing for me. It 'll only make talk, for she 'll tell it all round the village. Jest take that are newspaper that sticks out o' yer pocket, and fan me with it a leetle. There—I feel quite resusticated. I'm obleeged tew ye; guess I can manage to git hum now." [She rises.]

"Farewell, Elder Sniffles! adoo! we part to meet no more!"

"Ah, Mrs. Bedott! do not speak in that mournful strain; you distress me beyond all mitigation"—[he takes her hand] "pray reseat yourself, and allow me to prolong the conversation for a short period. As I before observed, your language distresses me beyond all duration."

"Dew you actilly feel distressed at the idee o' partin' with me?"

"Most indubitably, Mrs Bedott."

"Well, then, what 's the use o' partin' at all? O, what *hev* I said! what *hev* I said!"

"Ahem—ahaw! allow me to inquire—are you in easy circumstances, Mrs. Bedott?"

"Well, not intirely, yet; though I feel considerable easier 'n what I did an hour ago."

"Ahem! I imagine that you do not fully apprehend my meaning. I am a clergyman—a laborer in the vineyard of the Lord—as such you will readily understand I can not be supposed to abound in the filthy lucre of this world my remuneration is small—hence—"

"O, elder, how can you s'pose I'd hesitate on account o' your bein' poor? Don't think on 't—it only increases my opinion of you; money ain't no objick to me."

"I naturally infer from your indifference respecting the amount of *my* worldly possessions, that you yourself have—"

"Don't be oneasy, elder, dear—don't illude tew it again; depend on 't you 're jest as dear to me, every bit and grain, as you would be if you owned all the mines of Ingy."

"I will say no more about it."

"So I s'pose we' re engaged."

"Undoubtedly."

"We 're ingaged, and my tribbilation is at an end." [Her head droops on his shoulder.] "O, Shadrack! what will Hugelina say when she hears on 't?"

XVIII.

The Widow Writes to her Daughter, Mrs. Jupiter Smith.

Dear Melissy :—

I NOW take my pen in hand to tell you that I ruther guess you 'll be considerably astonished when you read what I set down to rite. I've got some news to tell, that you can't guess if you try till next never, so you may as well give it up furst as last afore you begin.. And you ain't to let on a word about it only to Jubiter and Kier and Seliny. Come to think, I don't care if you tell Sam Pendergrasses wife, bein' as how she 's a partickler friend o' mine.

But don't you open yer head about it to no other indiwiddiwal—for I want to supprise the Wiggletown folks, and make 'em open ther eyes a leetle. Come to considder, I guess you 'd better not tell Miss Pendergrass, for I'm afeard she can't keep it to herself She might let it out to the Kenipes, and they 'd tell the Crosbys, and the Crosbys they 'd carry it strait to Major Coon's wife, and she 'd be sure to tell old Dawson's wife (the widder Jinkins that was—she 't was

Poll Bingham), and she 's the verry undentical person I want to keep it from till it busts upon her all of a sudding, like a thunder-clap. I guess I 'll let her know 't I can hold my head as high as hern in futur, for who did she git but a decrippid old bung head that she wouldent a had if she could a got any body else. I guess on the hull you hadent better say nothin' about it to Kier's wife, for fear she 'll tell her folks, and they 'll sartinly devulgate it all round. If you dew tell her, you make her promise she won't hint a sillyble about it to her step-mother—she 't was Kesier Winkle—nor to nobody else. You must all keep it a perfound secret till I come. If nothin' happens to pervent, we shall be in Wiggletown next week, a Saturday, on our bridal tewer. A Sunday mornin we calkilate to go to meetin' along a you and Jubiter, and in the afternoon we shall tend the Baptist meetin'. I tell ye won't ther be some starin' in Wiggletown that day. I guess they 'll find out that I 'm as good as enny on 'em if not a leetle better. I shan't hev on none o' the things they 've ever seen me wear. My riggin 's to be intirely new. Yer Uncle Magwire has made me a present of a hansome green merino dress, and yer Aunt Magwire has gi'n me a new brown velvet bunnit, and yer Cousin Jefferson has presented me an elegant plaid shawl, and I calkilate to come out in 'em all in Wiggletown.

Speakin' o my new wardrobes, reminds me to tell

you that if Jabe Clark comes your way a peddlin', not to trade a cent's woth with him. You remember how he come it over me about the shoes, don't ye? Well it 's amazin' I should ever be such a fool as to be took in by him agin—but so 't was. He come along here a spell ago, and sarved me the awfullest trick that ever you heerd on. I was alone in the house —yer aunt had went to a sick nabor's, and the way he cheated me was perfectly dretful. My blud biles now a thinkin' on 't. He pretended he 'd experienced religion, and lamented over the way he used to cheat and lie; and as true as I live and breathe, actilly got round me so 't he preswaded me to swop away an elegant stun colored silk, that cost me a dollar a yard, for a miserable slazy stripid consarn, that he said was all the fashion now—called it "grody flewry"—and what makes it more aggravatin' made me pay tew dollars to boot. But that wa'n't the wost on 't, for come to onroll it, we found that three or four yards away at t' other eend on 't was all dammidged and stained up—'t wa'n't fit for nothing. Yer aunt was mad at me for bein' so took in, and yer uncle he lafft and hectored me and went on about it—you know what a critter he is to bother a boddy. At last I busted out a cryin,' and went off and shot myself up in my room, and stayed there till tea time—and when I come down, lo and behold, yer uncle stept up and handed me a new green merino dress—he 'd ben off to the store

and bought it a purpose for me, fringe, and buttons and every thing to trim it with, and I've got it made up, and it sets like a dandy—and I'm gwine to be married in it. But I can't help feelin' awfully gauled about the silk. I took it to Parker and Pettibone's and swoppt it for some things I wanted. They wouldent allow me but eighteen pence a yard, and 't was all 't was woth. Jabe made me take a couple o' hankerchers tew, for a dollar a piece—said he'd stake his repertation on 't they wa'n't half cotton—and no more they wa'n't, for come to dew 'em up, they showed out plain enuff that they was all cotton—did you ever? He got round the elder tew—made him pay five dollars for a buzzum pin—said 't was topiz sot in gold, and it turned out to be yaller glass with a pinchback rim round it. I was clear out o' pashence with the elder for bein' so green—but sittiwated as I was I couldent say nothin' ye know. If ever I come acrost Jabe Clark agin, if he don't ketch it, no matter. But I'm wonderful bizzy about these days—and so no more at present from your affectionate mother,

PRISSILLA P. BEDOTT.

P. S. Give my love to Jubiter. I'm gratified to hear that the baby is so forrard. What do you calkilate to call him? I hope it won't be Jubiter—for somehow I don't egzactly like the name, tho' it sounds well for a man. But don't in all favor name him arter

yer par. Hezekier's an awful name. How do ye like Shadrack? That's the name o' his grandfather that's to be. Yer uncle and aunt and Jeff sends love. P. P. B.

P. S. Yer cousin Jeff axed permission to read this letter, and he says I hain't told you who I'm gwine to be married tew, nor when the weddin's to be, nor nothin'. But 't ain't to be wondered at that I forgot, for I've got such a numerous number o' things to think on now. My future companion is the Baptist minister o' this place—by the name o' Elder Sniffles. The way we come acquainted was quite singular. You see I took to attendin' his meetin' because the Presbyterian minister here is such small potaters that 't wa'n't eddifyin' for me to set under his preachin', and understandin' that Elder Sniffles was a very gifted man I thought I 'd go to hear him. Well, I liked him wonderful well, he's a powerful speaker and his prayers is highly interestin'. So I goes to hear him a number o' times. He obsarved me and was evidently pleased with me—but during all the time I was creatin' such a sensation in his feelins I never knowd but what he had a wife. How I *did* feel when I found out he was a widdiwer. I was dretfully flustrated, and kep myself as scarce as possible. But he follered me up and parsevered, till at last I consented to accept o' him. It's mellancolly

to be alone in the world, and then ministers don't grow on every bush. The weddin' is to take place next week a Wensday evenin' at yer uncle's. Elder Yawpers, from Slabtown, is to reform the ceremony and preach in Elder Sniffleses place the next Sabbath when we're gone.

The elder lives in a gamble rufft yallar house. I mean to make him put wings to 't and make it look ruther more fashionable. It stans on a descendin' elevation that slants down to the canawl on the one side, and not fur behind it is a morantic grove. He hain't no family but a little highty tighty gal that they brought up. I tell ye if I don't make her stan' round when I get there I'm mistaken. We shall start for Wiggletown a Thursday, in the stage—and git there, I s'pose, Saturday evenin'. Now Melissy Smith remember you 're to keep it a profound secret. I don't want nobody in Wiggletown to know a word about it till they see us come a walkin' into meetin'. If you anser this afore we come, direct to the Reverend Mrs. Sniffles.

Your affectionate mar, P. P. BEDOTT,
(till next week).

P. S. I've writ an elegy on my marriage that Jeff thinks is one o' my best poims. He 's gwine to send it to be printed in the "Scrabble Hill Luminary," right under the marriage notice. He 's a keepin' it from

his par and mar, cause they hain't no sense o poitry—yer aunt espeshelly has always disencurridged my writin' for the papers. But she can't help herself.

P. P. B.

[From the Scrabble Hill Luminary.]

MARRIED.—In this village on Wedensday, the 20th inst., by the Rev. Elder Yawpers, of Slabtown, the Rev. O. SHADRACK SNIFFLES, of Scrabble Hill, to Mrs. PRISCILLA P BEDOTT, relict of the late Deacon Hezekiah Bedott, Esq., of Wiggletown.

The fair bride has sent us the following *morceau*—which our readers will unite with us in pronouncing equal to a former effusion from the same gifted pen. We wish the happy pair all the felicity which their distinguished abilities so richly merit.—EDS. LUM

TO SHADRACK.

Prissilla the fair and Shadrack the wise,
Have united their fortunes in the tenderest of ties;
And being mutually joined in the matrimonial connection,
Have bid adoo to their previous affliction.

No more will they mourn their widdered sittiwation,
And continner to sythe without mitigation;
But pardners, for life to be parted no more,
Their sorrers is eended, their troubles is o'er.

O Shadrack, my Shadrack! Prissilla did speak,
While the rosy red blushes surmantled her cheek,
And the tears of affection bedoozled her eye,
O Shadrack, my Shadrack! I'm yourn till I die

The heart that was scornful and cold as a stun,
Has surrendered at last to the fortinit one;
Farewell to the miseries and griefs I have had,
I 'll never desert thee, O Shadrack, my Shad!

XIX.

The Rev. Mrs. Snaffles Abroad.

LEFT Scrabble Hill this mornin' in the stage for Libertyville. Felt like death about leavin' my beloved companion, but he insisted on 't; said 't would be onpleasant for me to stay to hum while the parsonage was undergwine repairs; and, besides the journey 'd be for my health; so at last I yealded to conformity and went. 'T was determined I should visit the Crippinses, at Libertyville—Mrs. Crippin bein' my husband's cousin.

The mornin was derlicious, and Aurory shone with undiminished lusture. The feathered songsters wobbled in the groves; the breezes was ladened with the fragrance of ten thousand flowers, while natur seemed to vie with creation to render the scene one of unmitigated splendor. But I scercely noticed it a bit; for I wa'n't in a sittiwation to enjoy it a mite. Alas! my hull soul was with Shadrack.

Ther wa'n't but tew individiwals besides me in the stage, and they was men folks. I should a found the

journey awful tejus if I hadent amused myself by courtin' the muses, as Shadrack calls it. I had a pencil and a piece o' paper in my ridicule, and I axed one o' the gentlemen to lend me his hat to write on. He handed it out very perlitely, and I composed the follerin' stanzys:

TO MY OWN ONE.

Farewell to Scrabble Hill!
Farewell to my dear Shad!
I leave you much against my will,
And so I feel quite bad.

O Shadrack think o' me
When I am far away;
I sartingly shall think o' thee
Wherever I do stray.

Adoo! a fond adoo!
Dear pardner o' my heart.
The idee o' comin' back to you
Sustains me while we part.

O if my Shad should be
Onwell while I'm from home,
I shall feel most onpleasantdee,
And wish I had n't a come.

But I will hope and pray
That we may both be able
To meet agin some futur day,
Alive and comfor*table*.

Every thing conspired to remind me of my absent one. The men that was my feller passengers smoked the heft o' the time. My Shadrack loves his pipe, and it does me so much good to see him enjoy it. The in-

diwiddiwal that lent me his hat brought him very forcibly to my mind. He was drest in black, and had a wonderful dignified and thoughtful cast of expression. I made up my mind he was a clargyman as soon as I sot eyes on him; so when I handed back his hat I ventured to inquire where his field o' labor was. He hem'd and haw'd, and seem'd ruther imbarrised. So I says, says I, "I s'pose I ain't mistaken in takin' you for a clargyman?"

But afore he had time to answer, t' other one—he was quite a young man—spoke up, and says he, "You 're right, marm—it 's the Reverend Mr. Beadle, of Punkin Hook."

"And this is my principal deacon, Mr. Snobs," says Mr. Beadle.

So I told 'em who I was; and after the ice was broke, we had considerable interestin' conversation on a number o' tropics, espeshealy on the state o' religion in this section, particklarly in our respectable places of abode. They seem'd wonderful grieved at the inikity that prevails in our midst. Informed me that they 'd jest ben attendin' a convenmon to suppress the railroads runnin' a Sabberdays. They never travel'd on 't, cause it dident lay by a Sabberdays.

They seem'd to be very much interested in me. I show'd 'em the poetry I 'd ben writin' which they was wonderfully struck with. Brother Beadle proposed settin' on 't to music, and all on us singin' it together.

The deacon thought 't would go in "Away with mellancolly:" but not bein' conversant with that tune, I proposed "Haddam"—a great favorite o' mine. They said they 'd amost forgot Haddam; so I sung one stanzy to show 'em how it went, and then we all put to and sung it together. They dident make out very well I dident think; dident keep no time; seem'd to be what Jeff Magwire calls *independent singers*, that is, each one went intirely on his own hook, without payin' no attention to the rest. But no doubt they done the best they could, and I hadent ought to find fault.

The deacon requested me to give him the poim, in order to have it printed in the "Punkin Hook Patriot and Journal." After some hesitation I consented.

At Pukin Hook my interestin' feller travelers got out. I regretted partin', and so did they. I invited Brother Beadle to come to Scrable Hill and preach for us sometime. He squeezed my hand, and said he was delighted to have met with such a sister in Israel—he never should forget the refreshin' season he 'd enjoyed in my society.

The rest o the way to Libertyville I was the only passenger; but 't wa'n't no great distance. Jest as the horrizon was sinkin' behind the western skies, I arriv at Cousin Crippinses. When I told 'em who I was they received me with open arms, for they set a great deal by the elder. They 're olderly people, very well off; hain't no family but a son and daughter, both

married and settled. The daughter lives in the same place, is married to a risin' doctor by the name o' Briggs. In short, I think I should be quite contented here if my beloved companion was only with me. But the accumulatin' shadders o' night, aggravated by the descendin' of my candle into the socket, warns me that it is time to seek my piller, and resusticate ex austed nater by repose.

O for a sight o' Shadrack's face,
To shine amid the gloom!
To mitigate this lonesome place,
And shed a sweet perfume.

WED-NIGHT.—Agin I take my pen in hand to record the occurrences that have occurred durin' the day. I riz at an arly hour, and sallied forth into Cousin Crippinses garding to view the works of natur. O how it expends and illuminates the religious affections to contemplate the wonders of creation. The pinies was all in full blow, and the yallar lilies riz up strait and stiff to court the revigoratin' atmosphere. Also the cabbidge leaves was a glitterin' with dew drops, and looked like ever so many fans kivered with spangles. My hull soul was evaporatin' with delightful meditation, when cousin Crippin blowd the horn for breakfast, and I was obleeged to go in, though I 'd ten times ruther a stayed there than to eat. Cousin Crippin sets a tolerable good table—makes fust rate coffy, though I must say I can beat her on griddle cakes.

wonder whether she spunges 'em over night: don't believe she does; can't have good griddle cakes without spungin' 'em, accordin' to my way o' thinkin'.

This afternoon Cousin Crippinses daughter, Mrs. Briggs, she 't was Susan Ann Crippin, called on me; ruther an ornary looking woman, but quite ginteel and intellectible. The Crippinses had told me so much about her that I was prepared to be wonderfully struck up with her. She writes poetry for the "Libertyville Reflector." She invited me to attend a literary swearee at her sittiwation to-morrer evenin'. She says they hold their swearees once a fortnight, and she thinks they have a great attendancy to elevate the tone o' society, and axed if we had any such thing at Scrabble Hill. I told her no, that they was pretty high strung ther already, and dident need nothin' to elevate their tone. She smiled at this observation, and remarked that I was rather sarcastical.

She said they dident admit none to membership without they 'd had something printed; but others was sometimes invited to attend and enjoy the benefit of the intellectible feast. And they 'd be happy to see me. I 'd have the pleasure o' meetin' a number of literary charicters; among 'em "Nell Nox," the celebrated critic, and "Kate Kenype," the well-known and greatly admired advocate of women. She presumed I 'd heerd of 'em both. "Nell Nox" was very severe, very sarcastical, very, indeed. I told her I 'd

a number o' poims printed myself. She lookt quite surprised, and I confess I was surprisder yet that she hadent seen or heerd o' my pieces in the "Scrabble Hill Luminary." On the hull, I was ruther disappointed in Cousin Briggs. But I mean to go to that swearee any how, if nothin' happens. But we 're poor short sighted mortals.

Poor ignorant critters we!
To our short-sighted race
Things futur in life's mystery
And like enough never 'll take place.

FRIDAY.—Last night attended the literary swearee at Cousin Briggses, and was highly intertained. Ther was ten or a dozen present, and four on 'em had original productions. The most extinguished article was the Widder Reade's. She signs her perductions "Nell Nox." She 's a very fleshy woman, with a wonderful small head. I took particular notice of her 'cause she 's so notorious in a literary point o' view. She had a singlar lookin' head-dress stuck atop of her head. Her nose is awful long, and turns up at the eend; very handy, saves her the trouble o' turnin' on 't it up every time she reads a poor piece o' poetry, and she don't seem to read no other exceptin' Cousin Briggses. She was drest in a sky blue muslin dress with flounces almost up to her waist, that made her look shorter and fleshyer than she actilly was. She had a dretful severe critisism on the American

poits, espeshially a certing long-feller, as she called him, some tall indiwidiwal I s'pose. She cut him all to pieces, declaring that he had never writ a line that could be call poitry in all his born days She said that his Eve Angeline was a perfectly nonsensical humbug. I presume that 's some young woman he 's ingaged to. I thought if she was a mind to whale away aginst the long-feller she might, but she might a let his intended alone. Cousin Susan Ann axed me afterwards if I dident think Nell Nox was awful cuttin'. She said *she* shouldent like tc come under her lash. She wondered what long-feller 'd say when he come to see that critisism, as he ondoubtedly would, for 't would come out in "The Reflector" afore long; Nell contribbits to that paper. Thinksme I ain't afeared of her; I guess she 'll change her sentiments when she hears my piece. She 'll think ther is such a thing as poitry in Ameriky then. For I had in my pocket the stanzys I writ in the stage—I 'd brought 'em along, thinkin' like enough I should be called on to read something.

The editor of "The Reflector" was there; he 's president of the swearees. A wonderful small, jandery-lookin' young man, with blazin' red hair, and exceed inly pompous, but oncommon talented. He had an article on the prospects of the literary horizon throughout the world. His sentiments differed from Nell Noxes inasmuch as he held that Ameriky was the

only country where poitry had reached the hight of its zenith. To prove it, he brought forrard Cousin Briggses writins, said that even Nell Nox, the severest critic of the age, spared *her*; ther wa'n't nothing in her poitry that no critic could git hold of. He wound up, at last, by glorifyin', in a most eloquent manner, that both o' these remarkable writers were contribbitors to his paper.

Next come Cousin Susan Ann Briggs with her article. 'T was a very affectin' poim on, the death o' Deacon Paine's danghter. I don't remember but one stanzy, and that come in at the eend of every alternative verse. It runs thus:

> Fond parents weep for me no more,
> That I no more am given;
> We'll surely shall meet when life is ore,
> High up above in heaven.

I must ax Cousin Briggs for a copy on 't, it 's very good, though I actilly think I can beat it; 't ain't for me to say so, however. Her newspaper name is "Fenella Fitzallen."

The last indiwidiwal that read was an olderly young woman, named Samanthy Hocum, a wonderful tall, slab-sided, coarse lookin' critter. Her hair looked singular, 't was all raked back off her forrard, and made her phizmahogany look amazin' broad and brazen. She certainly was oncommon odd and ornary lookin'. Had on a red calico dress, and a queer kind

of a bobtailed little thing, made o' green silk, with brass buttons down it. Take her altogether, she was about as singular a critter in her appearance as I've seen in some time. But she's oncommon smart. She had an article on the subject o' "Woman's Rights." 'T was a powerful perduction. She hild that the men hadent no bizness to monopolize every thing, and trammil the female sect. I thought to myself they hadent showed no great disposition to *trammil* her so far. She writes for the "Pidgin Pint Record of Genius," and signs Kate Kenype.

Them was all the articles that was read last night, though ther was several more literary indiwidiwals ther. A fat, pudden-faced young man that writes poetry for the "Newville Star and Trumpet," and signs "Phil Philpotts." And then ther was a ruther good lookin' young woman that writes the amusin' articles for the same paper, and signs 'em "Betsy Buttertub," and some more, but I disremember their newspaper names.

After the readin' was over, the company diverted the time till the refreshments come in to walkin' round and round through the foldin' doors to the hall, and then from the hall through the foldin' doors agin, as if ther lives depended on 't. The editor, he walked with Nell Nox, and Phil Philpotts with Betsy Buttertub, and Kate Kenype, she stramanaded round alone, wonderful independent. I sot on the sofy and talked

to the Briggses till I got as dizzy as a fool, seein' 'em go round and round. I wanted to read my poim, and I seed plainly that Cousin Susan Ann dident mean to ax me to (shouldent wonder if she was a little jealous). So I determined I would read it whether or no; so when the company sot down to take refreshment, I speaks up and says, that seein' I'd ben so eddified myself, I thought I'd ought to contribute my share to the evenin's intertainment; and then without furder ado, I takes out my piece and reads it. 'T was very much admired. Nell Nox declared 't was what *she* called poitry, and the editor requested a coppy on 't to put in "The Reflector.' I gi'n it tew him. It dident strike me till after I got hum that I'd gi'n it the Reverend Mr. Beadle, to be printed in the "Punkin Hook Patriot and Journal." So I s'pose the tew papers 'll be accusin' one another o' stealin' on 't, and there 'll be a reglar newspaper quarril about it; and I shall be drawn into public notice in a manner very imbarrassin' to my retirin' disposition. But I can't help it. We literary characters must expect to be subjected to a great many more onpleasant things than falls to the lot o' privit indiwidiwals—it's the fate o' genius.

Don't know but what I'd try git up a Literary Swearee Society in Scrabble Hill, if I dident s'pose Sally Hugle'd make herself so conspickiwous in it. But I know she would. She's so awful vain, and

thinks herself such an amazin' poitess, though as to that, every body knows she can't write. I feel kinder sorry for her, she mistakes her calling so. I should lament to have her make such a laffin' stock of herself as she would if ther was any literary dewins there.

SATURDAY EVENING.—Larnt to-day, through Dr. Briggs, and by a long chain o' circumstances tew numerous to be detailed here, that the indiwidiwals that past themselves off for a clargyman and deacon in the stage, was nothing but a couple of hoss dealers from Varmount, with no more sense o' religion than the animals they trade in. O, 't is mellancoly! I feel to lament that human natur should be sunk to such a turrible a pitch as to deceave a reverend lady so awfully. I pitty the poor degraded, deluded critters from the bottom o' my heart. I hope they may have grace and space to repent. To think o' my bein' so took in! Well, they 'll have it to answer for, that 's a comfort. But I hope they 'll be led to see ther sinfulness afore it 's tew late. To think o' my lettin' 'em have my poitry tew, that galls me. I wish they 'd steal some hosses and be took up and sent to the states prison, the miserable wretches—but I forgive 'em—I always forgive—I never lay up nothing aginst nobody—the consarnid critters!

To-morrer 'll be Sunday—intend to go to meetin if I can command my feelins sufficient But ondoubt-

edly I shall be all day a counterastin' the preacher with my companion, and so sha'n't enjoy my mind, and have as refreshin' a season as I otherways should.

Agin the sacred day
  Of sacred rest has come,
And to my inmost feelins brings
  My Shadrack's image hum.

I d ruther spend the day
  With him than where I am,
A hearin' of him preach and pray,
  And givin' out the psalm.

XX.

The Reb Mrs. Sniffles at Home.

"I MUST show ye my daggertype, sister Magwire, that I had took while I was gone."

"I want to know if you 've got one o' them things! I 've heerd about 'em, and had a great curiosity to see 'em. Pray how do they take 'em?"

"Well, I 'll tell ye. Sal! Sal Blake, come in here! Why don't ye never start some time or other when I call ye? You go up stairs to my chamber, and fetch here that thing kivered with morocker, that lies on the stand. Step quick, you—and don't ye be gone longer 'n till next day after to morrer, if ye can help it. And here! don't you open it—you fetch it right straight along down—d' ye hear. That young one does try my patience the worst way—she's the slowest o' all created critters. I don't b'leve it done her any good stayin' with you while we was gone. I wish the elder 'd a sent her to the Widder Grimeses—I guess she 'd a made her fly round. I don't s'pose you trained her a mite."

"Well, I did n't see no occasion for it. She seemed

willin' enough to dew without drivin'. And besides, I don't approve o' workin' half-grown gals so hard as some folks dew. It stunts 'em, and injures their constitutions."

"I declare, if that ain't a bright idee! jist as if—As true as natur, there she comes! What 's got into ye, Sal, to make ye so spry all of a sudding? I guess ye seen a ghost on the stairway, did n't ye? There Sister Magwire, isn't that strikin'? Sal, you huzzy! where 's yer manners? don't ye know no better 'n to be a gawpin' over Miss Magwire's shoulders? go into the kitchin—budge!"

"Why Sister Sniffles, dew let the poor child look at it—what harm 'll it dew?"

"Sister Magwire, I wish you would n't interfere in my domestic arrangements—Sal, you put for the kitchin, and finish pearin' them apples and when ye 've got 'em done, take hold and scour them pans—and don't ye stop to look out o' the winder—and as soon as ye git done scourin' the pans, come here, and I 'll tell ye what to do next. I rather guess I 'll larn that critter to know her place, afore I 've ben here much longer. She hain't never had no instruction about what belongs to her sittiwation, at all."

"Poor thing I don't blame her, I 'm sure. You know, Miss Sniffles, the elder's first wife, brought her up as it she was her own daughter."

"Well, I mean to show her the difference betwixt

genteel folks and them that 's born to be underlin's. But ain't that a wonderful strikin' picter?"

"It is, actilly; looks as nat'ral as life—especially the elder's specs and your cap."

"I had a couple more just like it took at the same time: one for Melissy, and t' other for Sam Pendergrasses wife. I think the position 's very interestin' —me a leanin' on the elder's shoulder, and holdin' hold o' his hand."

"They must cost a good deal—don't see how you could afford it."

"Well, I 'll tell ye how 't was—'t was a curus circumstance. At Miss Pendergrasses party—see, I hain't told ye about her makin' a party for us, I guess; well, she did, and it was a reglar kind o' a would-if-ye-could consarn, jist such as she always makes out when she tries to cut a spludge. But Sam's wife *meant* well enough. And on the hull 't was quite pleasant. Most o' my old acquaintances was there: Major Coon and his wife, pompious as ever; Mr. Crane and his wife—she 't was Kesier Winkle. She don't paint her face no more now her market 's made —looks wonderful humbly. And there was old Dawson and his wife—Widder Jinkins, ye know—she 't was Poll Bingham. She and Miss Coon had their heads together half the evenin', a whisperin' about me and the elder. But I did n't care—I tell ye, I hild my head as high as any on 'em, if not a *leetle* grain

higher. Ther was a great deal o' notice took o' me and the elder. He talked up and made considerable o' a sensation. I told him aforehand to do his purtiest, for I wanted old Dawson's wife to see 't I 'd got a pardner ruther above a common plow-jogger, such as hern is. And I guess she felt it some, for she looked mighty spiteful. While the elder was a talkin', she kept a hunchin Miss Coon, and grinnin'. Sam Pendergrasses wife said she obsarved to *her* that she should think I 'd be in a constant state o' consarn about the elder, for fear he 'd git choaked with a big word stickin' in his throat. Miss Pendergrass said she would n't care a cent about it, if she was me; for 't was plain enough 't wa'n't nothin' but envy because her husband could n't talk so."

"But you was gwine to tell about them daggertypes."

"O yes. Well, Sam Pendergrasses wife axed Miss Coon to play on the pianner. They 've got a pianner for Ann Elizy—piece o' extravagance in my opinion—don't see how Sam Pendergrass can afford such things—besides, I don't b'leve Ann Elizy 'll ever make much of a musicianer, for she can't play but a few tunes yit, and she 's ben a takin' lessons amost three months. I spent the day there one day, and she thumpt away on the consarnid thing half the time. 'T was enough to split a body's skull open. Well, Miss Coon she sot down to the pianner—and o all

things! I wish you could a ben there! If 't wa'n't *killin'*, then no matter. She throw'd back her head, and she rolled up her eyes, and she thrum'd it off with the tips o' her fingers. But good gracious! her singin'! you'd a gin up, I know, if you'd a heerd it! The way she squawked it out was a caution to old gates on a windy day! See, what was it she sung? O, I remember—a dretful nonsensical thing, that kept a sayin' every little while '*Jimmeni* fondly thine own.' I was perfectly dizgusted."

"But what has all that to dew with the daggertypes?"

"Well, I was a gwine to tell—why can't ye have patience? I was settin' right by the pianner when she sung, and I obsarved that she had on a wonderful curus buzzom-pin. So, after she'd got done her music, and gone back t' other side o' the room, I says to Melissy, says I, what a sing'lar lookin' buzzum-pin Miss Coon's got on—wonder what it's made of! 'Why, mar,' says she, 'it's a daggertype o' the Major—did n't you never see a daggertype?" 'No,' says I, 'but I've heerd o' 'em.' So Melissy she got right up, and went and axed Miss Coon if she would n't be kind enough to let mar see her pin. I was awful mad at Melissy—did n't want that stuck up critter to know 't I noticed her pin—so I speaks up, and I says, 'I want ye to understand, Miss Coon, that I did n't request Miss Smith to ax ye to show me yer pin.' 'O, law,'

says she, 'you're perfectly welcome to see it.' So she onfastened it, and handed it to Melissy, mighty graci ous She 's always wonderful polite to Melissy—don't know, I m sure, what's the reason she treats her so much better 'n ever she did me; but I s'pose ther ain't nothin' about *her* to be jealous of. Well, Melissy she fetched it over, and I could n't help lookin' at it; and sure enough, there was the major, nat'ral as life, with all his trainin' regimentals on—'t was complete. Miss Coon axed me how I liked it. 'T ain't wonderful hansome,' says I, 'but it looks full as well as the major.' Miss Coon turned rather red, and 't was plain to be seen she felt cut up. Melissy—silly thing—she kind o' wanted to plaster over what I 'd said, so she praised it up to the skies—said she never see any thing sc perfect—and axed Miss Coon where 't was took. Miss Coon said the major had it took in Gambletown a few days afore. Ther was a gentleman stayin' there a few weeks, that done 'em uncommon correct. 'C. mar,' says Melissy, 'I heerd the elder say he meant to go home by the way o' Gambletown -- why can't you stop and have yourn and the elder's took for me? Jubiter 's got a cousin livin' there—a young man named Jo Baker, and he 's a comin' out here in a few weeks. You can leave 'em with him to fetch.' 'Well,' says I, 'I 'll see about it.' After that, Melissy she teazed us till we promise to git 'em for her. She concluded she 'd like to have us represented

together in one picter. We 'd made our calculations to stop in Gambletown a day or tew on our way hum. The elder was some acquainted with Elder Cumstork, the minister there—had met him at the meetin' o' the Baptist Presbytery. We left Wiggletown a Monday, went round by Pidgin Pint, and stopped there toward night. The elder inquired where the Baptist minister lived, and we went there. We had n't never heerd o' him afore—but 't was better to go there than to have a tavern bill to pay. His name was Elder Hawley. The elder he introduced himself as the Rev. Elder Sniffles, from Scrabble Hill, and his consort. Well, brother Hawley invited us in and introduced us to his wife. She was a sick lookin' woman, with a hull raft o' young ones squallin' round her. 'T wa'n't very pleasant there, they did n't seem to be in wonderful good circumstances. But they treated us very polite, and we staid till Thursday, for Brother Hawley was a holdin' a protracted meetin', and invited the elder to stay awhile and assist. A Thursday we come on to Gambletown, got there in the afternoon. Elder Cumstork was very glad to see us, and so was his wife. I was quite surprised when I seen her, for I used to know her some. Her name was Mary Cushman. She used to keep school in Wiggletown when Melissy was a little gal. I sent her to Miss Cushman's school. Melissy liked her very well, but I never thought much o' her. She was kind o' proud

—could n't git acquainted with her. She would n't talk about nobody. She had quite a quarrel with the Widder Jinkins about Alviry. Miss Jinkins took Alviry out o' school. There was a great deal said about it. Every body was a takin' sides. Miss Jinkins went all around blazin' away against Miss Cushman. But I could n't hear o' Miss Cushman's saying any thing, though I s'pose Miss Jinkins did abuse her shamefully. Well, I invited her to drink tea at our house a purpose to see if she would n't have something to say about it, but she never opened her head. I tried my best to draw her out—expressed *my* opinion o' the Widder Jinkins without resarve. But still the provokin' critter never said a syllable about the matter. I tell you 't was the last time I axed her there to tea. I was disgusted with her. I took quite a dislike to her, and when she went away I did n't care whether I ever heerd from her agin or not. And I had n't heerd since—did n't know what had become o' her. But I know'd her the minnit I clapped my eyes on her in Gambletown, for she 's ruther a singular lookin' woman. 'Law me,' says I, 'Mary Cushman, I want to know if that 's you?' 'Jest so,' says sne, 'but I can't for the life o' me tell who you are.' 'The dear me,' say I, 'why I 'm the Reverend Miss Sniffles, she 't was Widder Bedott, o' Wigglctown.' 'Sure enough,' says she, 'I wonder I did n't know you, but I 've seen so many folks since I was there, it

ruther confuses me sometimes.' I thought 't was a pretty poor excuse for fogettin' *me*, but I passed it off. She was wonderful polite to us. They 'd ben to dinner, but she went and got dinner for us right off. She don't keep no help, does all her own work, and I must say she keeps the house in very nice order, and cooks pretty well considerin' she used to be a school-marm; school teachers don't ginerally make no great o' housekeeper's. Her husband seemed to be wonderful proud o' her; told how well she got along, and what a good manager she was, and all that. But I thought I 'd let 'em know 't I had n't no great opinion o' her housekeepin'. She sot on a leg o' biled mutton for us, and some vegetables and bread and butter. So when we sot down to the table I declined takin' any o' the meat. Miss Cumstork axed me if I wa'n't hungry. 'Yes,' says I, 'but I don't like biled vittals, ain't used to 'em.' She felt awful bad, and went and fetcht on some cold roast beef. But I told her she need n't a troubled herself, for I could n't eat cold meat. So she said she 'd cut off some slices and heat 'em in a stew-pan. I begged o' her not to dew it, for in my opinion warmed up vittals wa'n't fit to eat 'I 'll make out with a potater,' says I, 'and a piece o' bread.' At last she gin up tryin' to make me take any thin' else. But the elder he eat wonderful hearty. I kept a winkin' at him to hold up, but he would n't take the hint. Afterward she brought on a rice puddin',

and the elder let into 't in arnest. I eat some tew, for, to tell the truth, I was awful hungry, but did n't want 'em to think I eat it because 't was good, so, I says, says I, 'rice puddin' 's terrible plain; but it 's better 'n nothin', and I s'pose I shall be sick if I don't eat somethin'.' When we was alone the elder undertook to take me to do about findin' fault with the vittals, but I told him he need n't be consarned, for I meant to let the Cumstorks see 't I know'd what was what, though I had n't been a school-marm. And I made it a pint to turn up my nose at every thing in the house all the time I was there; and I tell ye, I could n't help laughin' in my sleeve to see how uncomfortable it made 'em feel. Well, we stayed till the next Monday, and the elder he preached for brother Cumstork. The Gambletown folks was very much taken with him, and with me tew, all the most extinguished indiwiddiwals in the place called on me. I see that they seemed to think Miss Cumstork was an amazin' smart, intellectible woman, but whenever I got a chance I let 'em know 't *I* did n't think so, nor the Wiggletown folks did n't think so nother. I ruther guess the Cumstorks 'll have to draw in their horns after this—"

"Well, now, Sister Bedott—Sister Sniffles I mean—I want to know if you think 't was Christianlike to go there and abuse that poor woman in her own house, and talk aginst her to her own congregation into the bargain, when, accordin' to yer own story,

she done all she could to make yer visit pleasant? I 'd be ashamed to tell on 't if I 'd acted so ridiculous I don't see what yer object was cuttin' up so."

"I tell ye I wanted to show 'em 't I knew'd what was what."

"Well, I guess ye show'd 'em *one* thing pretty plain —that ye dident know what *politeness* was."

"I guess, Sister Magwire, 't I know what politeness is as well as you dew. It looks *well* for *you* to be a' tellin' *me* what 's right and what 's wrong, when my first pardner was a deacon and my present one 's a minister—when I want *your* advice I 'll ax for it."

"Well, well, I want to hear about them daggertypes —how they make 'em, and all in relation tew it. It 's a wonderful art—beats all I ever heerd of. How is it they take 'em in so little while?"

"Well, I 'll tell ye. Ther 's a pole stuck up in the middle o' the floor, with a machine atop on 't—kind of an uplong shaped consarn—looks for all the world like the old cannon they haul out on Independence and training days, about *so* wide and *so* long. In the little eend on 't ther 's a hole, and into that hole the daggerotyper slips the steel plate that the picter 's to be made on, and kivers it up. Then ye have to set down in a cheer about as fur from the machine as from here to that stove, on an average. Then he fastens yer head in an iron consarn to keep it still—for ye 've got to set as onmovable as a wax-work, and as

stiff as stillyards, or the picter 'll be spiled. Then ye must look strait at the machine that stans there a pint in' right at yer face—"

"Grammany! I should think 't would be an awful sittiwation. I should be frightend out o' my wits."

"Lawful sakes! I wa'n't a bit skairt. Well, ther 's a winder right aside o' ye, and a white sheet fastened up all round ye, and when ye 've got fixt, he takes the kiver off o' the machine, and the light reflects into the winder and onto yer face, and from yer face it refragerates onto the steel plate, and executes the picter in a minit."

"Well, I don't understand now a bit better 'n I did afore."

"I never! how dumb you be? it 's as clear as day light to me. I seen right through it at fist."

"Well, what do they call them daggertypes for?"

"O, I s'pose that 's on account o' the dagger they use to polish off the plates aforehand. Seems to me that was what Jabe said."

"Jabe who?"

"Why Jabe Clark—he took that picter."

"You don't!"

"It 's a curus circumstance. I'll tell ye how it happened. I 'd no more idee o' the daggertyper bein' Jabe Clark than nothing in the world. Nobody dident know it. He was there in Gambletown cuttin' a mighty swell with his daggertypes—makin' money like dirt. Had his gallery over Smith's store—altered

his name—had a great flarin' sign stuck up over his door that had on 't, 'Mr. Augustus Montgomery, Daggertyper.' Well, we went in there a Friday to look at his picturs, and see what he taxed for takin' 'em—thought mabby he 'd strike off some on account of our belongin' to the clargy. Brother Cumstork went with us and introduced us; and Mr. Montgomery was wonderful polite—showed all his picters: told us all about 'em tew—the way he took 'em and so on; though most on 'em was his own likenesses. There was Mr. Montgomery a readin'—Mr. Montgomery a smokin'—Mr. Montgomery a shavin'—and ever so many more. I forgit what they was all a dewin'. All the time I kept a thinkin' I 'd seen the man afore; but to save my life I couldent remember when nor where. He looked kind o' natral some how, and his voice sounded jest as if I 'd heerd it afore. But then he lookt so different, no wonder I dident know him at first. He 'd cut off his whiskers all, only a bunch on the tip of his chin; and he 'd got on spectacles though I noticed he looked over the tops of 'em. He had a wig, tew, considerable blacker 'n his own hair. The elder and me we stood up together and axed him if he thought we 'd *take* well. He looked at us a minute, and then says he, 'Jingo! you 'd make an admyrable picter.' Then it popped right into my head who 't was. I was on the pint o' screamin right out—but I happened to think and hild my tongue, for

thinks me, I'll come up with ye old feller for that 'grody flewry' afore I quit ye. So I told him we'd set for our picters; and he fixed the plate and the machine and arranged us in our cheers the way we wanted to be represented—and then he took us. But the first one wa'n't good. The Elder he hysted his eyebrows—it's a trick o' hisen—and so his pictur had as much as a dosen pair of eyes. 'T was ruther bigger 'n I wanted it tew. I axed him if he couldent make one ruther smaller. He said, 'O yes, he had a process by which he could manage 'em down to any size.' So we sot agin, a little furder off from the machine, and that time 't was good. I was so much pleased with it, I told him I'd have another one took for Miss Sam Pendergrass, a friend o' mine. The elder looked ruther surprized, but he dident say-nothing. Well, he got another one full as good as the first; and I liked it so well, I concluded to have another one to fetch home with me. The elder opened his eyes and looked surpriseder 'n ever; but I gin him a look, and he hild his tongue. After he'd finished 'em all up, and got 'em all sot in the cases, says I, 'Well, now, Mr. Montgomery, what d' ye tax?' 'Well,' says he, 'my reglar price for a double picter is tew dollars; but I always want to dew the fair thing by the clargy—ginerally make a pint to throw off some for them. So in your case I wont tax but five dollars for the hull.' As good luck would have

it, I happened to have that ar buzzom-pin he sold me elder in my work-pocket. It had ben there ever since the Elder first showed it to me. So I takes it out and holds it up afore him. 'T was as green as grass, and any body could see in a minit that 't was brass. 'There,' says I, 'that 's a buzzum-pin that my husband bought of a pedlar and paid him five dollars for it. He was a wonderful pious pedlar—had jest experienced religion—and of course he wouldent take the advantage of a minister o' the Gospel; and *he* said 't was woth double the money he taxed; but seein' he was tradin' with the clargy, he wouldent charge but half-price. To be sure, it dident look so *green* then as it does now—the *greenness* was principally on husband's side. Now I 'm willin' to dew as well by you as Jabe Clark done by my husband. I 'll let ye have this pin to pay for the picters, and won't ax no boot.' Then I gin him a knowin' look.

I wish you could a seen the critter. I tell ye 't was *rich*, as Jeff says. He turned pale, and then he turned red, and looked as if he was completely stumped. The elder he begun to ham and haw as if he was a gwine to say something. But I looked at him in a way that made him think 't wa'n't woth while. Elder Cumstork tew looked perfectly as tonished. He examined the pin, and says he, "Why Sister Sniffles, this ere 's brass and no mistake--that pedlar cheated brother Sniffles most wickedly."

"What!" says I, "you don't s'pose that a pedlar that had experienced religion at a protracted meetin', and sold splendid 'grody flewry' silk for only a dollar a yard, and linen cambric handkerchers that *wa'n't half cotton,* for half price, would put off a brass buzzom-pin onto a clargyman for gold! what an idee!" Brother Cumstork dident say no more. Well, *Mr. Montgomery* he stood there with his knees a shakin' and a lookin' as if he 'd like to exasperate through the key hole. At last says I "Come, what do you think o' the offer?" "Well, well," says he, "raly, I—I—" Then I marched strait up to him, and hild the pin right under his nose, and says I, "Mistopher! do you darst to say that are pin 's brass?" He ketcht it out o' my hand and stuffed it into his pocket, and says he, "Well, bein' as you belong to the clargy, I s'pose I 'd ought to accommodate ye." So I took my daggertypes and started off. Jest as I was a passin' out behind the men, Jabe ketcht me slyly by the sleeve, and says he, "Widder!" "That ain't my name," says I "Miss Sniffles, I mean," says he, "I hope ye'll keep *dark.*" I dident say nothing; but after we 'd got into the street, right by the corner of the store, where ther was a hull mess o' men standin', I looks up to his winder and shakes my daggertypes in his face and says I, "Jaby Clark, don't you feel *green?*" Then I explained it to Elder Cumstork; and he told

Smith—and I tell ye it flew like every thing. The next mornin' *Mr. Montgomery* was *missin'*.

There comes the elder—he's ben over to Deacon Hugle's. I'll be hanged if he ain't a comin' in with out cleanin' his feet. I wonder if any woman ever had ther patience so tried as mine is all the time! Here ye be—mud and all. I wonder if it ever occurred tew ye what that scraper was put to the door for? Ye never think o' cleanin' yer feet no more 'n as if ther wa'n't such a thing in the world. I guess yer first wife must a ben a wonderful particklar woman."

"I assure you, Mrs. Sniffles, I was not aware that any particles of mud adhered to the extremities of my boots."

"I presume ye wa'n't aware on't. Ye'd go head foremost into a mud puddle as big as a meetin'-house, and not be aware on't. Sal! fetch here the dust pan, and brush, and clean up this mud, quick. There! jest like ye! can't take it up without gittin' down on yer knees to dew it."

"I got down to look after it—couldent see where 't was."

"Couldent see it, hey! Hain't ye no eyes in yer head? Ye've ben so used to mud and dirt all yer days, I s'pose you actilly don't see it without it's a lump as big as yer head. Scoured them pans yit?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Well, why dident ye come and let me know when ye got done—say?"

"Because I only just got done this minute."

"That's a likely story! I'll bet a dollar ye've ben a lookin' out o' the winder, or talkin' to Bets Wilson this half hour. Go along and make up a fire, and put on the tea kittle, [boxing her ears] and then go out and mop off the steps, and git 'em ready for Mr. Sniffles to dob up with mud agin next time he comes in"

"Well, Sister Sniffles, I guess I must go."

"What! I thought ye was a gwine to stay to tea."

"No, I can't—husband 'll be expectin' me hum to drink tea with him."

"Well, then, I'll jest throw on my things and run over and take a dish with ye, for I'm tired, and don't feel like gittin' vittals myself."

"Brother Sniffles you come along tew."

"Well, then, Sal you may take off the tea-kettle; and don't ye make no more fire—shet up the stove, and let it go down, and take yer knittin'-work and stick to't stiddy. If ye want any thing to eat afore we git back, ye may git some o' that cold pork and taters. Thank fortin the cubbard's locked, or I s'pose she'd be a pokin' her nose into the rest o' the vittals—moopin' critter.'

XXI.

The Reb Mrs. Sniffles Expresses her Sentiments in Regard to the Parsonage.

"I SAY I'm disgusted with this old house; 't ain't fit for ginteel folks to live in; looks as if 't was built in Noah's time, with its consarned old gamble ruff and reetle bits o' winders a pokin' out like bird cages all round. Painted yaller, too, and such a humbly yaller; for all the world jest the color o' calomel and jollup!"

"But you are aware, Mrs. Sniffles—"

"I say 't ain't fit to live in. I'm ashamed on 't. I feel awful mortified about it whenever I look at Miss Myerses and Miss Loderses, and the rest o' the hansome sittiwations in the neighbor'hood, with their wings and their piazzers and foldin' doors, and all so dazzlin' white. It 's ridicilous that we should have to live in such a distressid lookin' old consarn, when we 're every bit and grain as good as they be, if not ruther better."

"Nevertheless, the house is very comfortable."

"Comfortable! who cares for comfort when gintili-

ty 's consarned! *I* don't. I say if you 're determined to stay in it, you 'd ought to make some alterations in 't. You 'd ought to higher the ruff up and put on some wings, and build a piazzer in front with four great pillars to 't, and knock out that are petition betwixt the square room and kitchen, and put foldin' doors instid on't, and then build on a kitchen behind, and have it all painted white, with green winder blinds. *That* would look something *like*, and then I shouldent feel ashamed to have ginteel company come to see me, as I dew now. T' other day, when Curnel Billins and his wife called, I couldent help noticin' how contemptible she looked round at the house and furniture—I actilly was so mortified I felt as if I should sink right through the floor."

"But you know, Mrs. Sniffles—"

"I say we 'd ought to have new furnitur—sofys and fashionable cheers, and curtains, and mantletry ornaments, and so forth. That old settee looks like a sight. And them cheers, tew, they must a come over in the ark. And then ther ain't a picter in the house, only jest that everlastin' old likeness o' Bonyparte. I 'll bet forty great apples it 's five hundred years old. I was raly ashamed on 't when I see Miss Curnel Billins look at it so scornful when they called here. I s'pose she was a counterastin' it with their beautiful new picters they 're jest ben a gittin up from New York, all in gilt frames. I seen one on 'em t' other

day in to Mr. Bungle's shop, when I went in with Sister Tibbins to look at her portrait that he 's a paintin'. I seen one o' Miss Billinses picters there. 'T was a splendid one, as big as the top o' that are table, and represented an elegant lady a lyin' asleep by a river, and ther was a little angel a hoverin' in the air over her head, jest a gwine to shoot at her with a bow and arrer. I axed Mr. Bungle what 't was sent to his shop for, and he said how 't Miss Billins wa'n't quite satisfied with it on account o' the angel's legs bein' bare, and she wanted to have him paint some pantaletts on 'em, and he was a gwine to dew it as soon as he got time. He thought 't would be a very interestin' picter when he got it fixed. I think so tew. I dew admire picters when they ain't all dirty and faded out like old Bony there. Them Scripter pieces that Sister Myers has got hangin' in her front parlor—them she painted afore she was married, strikes me as wonderful interestin', especially the one that represents Pharoh's daughter a findin' Moses in the bulrushes. Her parasol and the artificials in her bunnit is jest as natral as life. And Moses, he looks so cunnin' a lyin' there asleep, with his little coral necklace and bracelets on. O it 's a sweet picter. And I like that other one, tew, that represents Pharoh a drivin' full tilt into the Red Sea after the Isrelites. How natral his coat-tails flies out. I think some Scripter pieces would be very approbriate for a minister's house. We might git Mr

Bungle to paint some for the front parlor, and our portraits to hang in the back parlor, as Miss Myers has theirn. But law me! what 's the use o' my talkin' o' havin' picters or any thing else that 's decent? You don't take no interest in it. You seem to be perfectly satisfied with this flambergasted old house and every thing in it."

"My former consort never desired any thing superior to it."

"Your former consort! I 'm sick and tired o' hearin' about her. 'T aint by no means agreeable to have dead folks throw'd in yer face from mornin' to night. What if she was satisfied with her sittivation? 'T ain't no sign *I* should be. I s'pose she hadent never ben used to nothin' better, but I *have*."

"But, Mrs. Sniffles, you must recollect that—"

"I say 't ain't to be put up with. I want to have some company—ben wantin' tew ever sence we was married; but as for invitin' any ginteel people a visitin' to such a distressid old shell as this is, I won't dew it.—and *so*—Miss Billins and Miss Loder and *them* would say I was tryin' to cut a swell, and couldent make it out. And I don't mean to accept no more invitations amonkst them that lives in style, for it aggravates me, it does, to think how different I 'm sittiwated. So you may make yer pastoral visits without *me* in future, for I 've made up my mind not to go out none as long as we live in this ridicilous old house."

"But recollect, Mrs. Sniffles, this house is a parsonage —I occupy it rent free."

"I don't care if 't is a parsonage. I say the congregation might afford you a better one, and for my part, I 'm disposed to make a fuss about it."

"Mrs. Sniffles, you must be aware that I am not possessed of inexhaustible means. I have never attempted to conceal from you this fact—therefore, you must also be aware that there exists an entire impossibility of my erecting a new residence on the plan which you propose. Nor is it at all probable that the congregation would be willing to make such alterations in this as you suggest. Yet, I assure you, that I have not the slightest objection to your employing your *own* means in the construction of a more elegant edifice."

"My own means!"

"Yes, Mrs. Sniffles. Your dissatisfaction with the parsonage is so great, that I have for some time past been expecting you would propose building a new residence; and I repeat that such an appropriation of a portion of your funds would meet my concurrence."

"My funds!"

"Your funds, Mrs. Sniffles. It is a delicate subject and one on which I have hitherto hesitated to make inquiry, although possessing an undoubted right to do so. I have been expecting ever since our union, that

you would inform me how and where your property is invested."

"My property!"

"Your property, Mrs. Sniffles. In what does it consist, if I may be permitted to inquire?"

"Land o' liberty! you know as well as I dew."

"What am I to infer from that observation?"

"Jest what you 're a mind to. I ain't woth money, and I never said I was."

"Mrs. Sniffles, you are well aware that on your arrival in this place, common report pronounced you to be an individual of abundant means, and I have always labored under this impression—an impression which, allow me to remind you, yourself confirmed in a conversation which occurred between us in the parsonage grove."

"You don't mean to say 't I *told* you so, and you darsent say 't I did."

"A-hem—I mean to say that you did not deny it when I delicately alluded to the subject. On the contrary you led me to infer that such was the fact, and under that impression I was induced to accede to your proposal."

"My proposal? What do you mean to insinniwate?"

"I should have said your—your—evident inclination for a—a—matrimonial engagement. I deeply regret, Mrs. Sniffles, that you should have allowed yourself to practice upon me what I can not consider in any

other light than that of a heinous and unmitigated deception. I regard it as an act quite incompatible with your religious professions."

"You dew, hey? vell, you can't say 't I ever told you out and out that I was woth property; and if you was a mind to s'pose so from what I *did* say, I 'm sure 't ain't my fault, nor I ain't to blame for other folkses saying I was a rich widder."

"Mrs. Sniffles, I lament exceedingly that you should view it in that light. You can but acknowledge that it was your duty when I requested information on the subject, to have given me a correct account of your property."

"I hadent no property to give ye an accout of."

"You should have told me so, Mrs. Sniffles, and not have suffered me to infer that you was in easy circumstances."

"I tell ye agin, I couldent help what you *inferred*, and s'pozen I could, which was the most to blame, me for lettin' you think I was rich, or you for marryin' me *because* you thought I was rich? For my part, I think *that* was ruther incompatible with *your* professions. *Ministers* had ought to have their affections sot above transiterry riches."

"Mrs. Sniffles, this is a—a—delicate subject, we will waive it, if you please."

"But I think the congregation ought to fix up the house."

"I will lay it before the session at the next meeting."

"Well, dew, for pity's sake. And if they agree to fix it, I'll go a journey somewhar while it 's a bein' altered, and you can board round, and Sal can stay at sister Magwire's."

Extracts from Mrs. Sniffles' Diary.

SABBATH DAY EVENING.—O, what a precious season this day has been to me! My pardner has hild forth with uncommon unction. O, may he long be a burnin' and shinin' light to the world! My feelins to-day has been of the most desirable natur. O that I could say so every night! but, alas! ther is times when I feel as cold as a stun, when the face o creation seems to frown, and evidences is wonderful dull. And then agin, I 'm as bright as a dollar, and have such wonderful clear manifestations, and such oncommon nearness—and such a sense of intarnal satisfaction. O that I could always feel as I 'd ought to feel. Dear suz! I 'm often reminded o' what my deceased companion, the lamented Deacon Bedott, used to remark, "We 're all poor critters."

To-day we 're liable to fall,
To-morrow up we climb,
For 't ain't our nature to enjoy
Religion all the time.

MONDAY.—Have ben very much exercised to-day on account of Sally Blake, our help. Her depraved

natur has showed out in a very tryin' manner. But I feel to rejoice that I 've ben enabled to be faithful with her. How I have wrastled day and night for that distressid child! O, that I may have grace to bear with patience and resignation the daily trials I have to undergo with her! I feel to be thankful that thus far I have ben supported and hain't sunk under it as many would a done. O that I may be enabled to feel and realize that such afflictions is sent for the trial of my faith.

THURSDAY.—O, what a responsible sittiwation is mine as President of the "F. U. D. G. E., and A. Society!" I 've realized it in an overwhelmin' degree to-day. Attended the meetin' this afternoon, and some very onpleasnt circumstances occured. But I feel to be truly thankful that I had grace to presarve my uniformity in the midst of the diffikilties. I wish I could say as much for some o' the rest o' the members, especially Sall Hugle. O, the vanity and pride o' that critter! it grieves me to the heart.

SATURDAY.—My beloved Shadrach has jist informed me that the parsonage is to be repaired and made comfortable. My dear pardner has requested it to be done intirely to please me, and quite unbeknown to me. It 's true it needs it bad enough, but then I never should a thought o' complainin' about it. I feel that I 'm a pilgrim and a sojourneyer here, and hadent ought to be partickler, and so I told the elder when he

proposed havin' the house repaired. But he insisted on 't and I consented more for his sake than my own. O that I may be truly thankful for the blessins I injoy especially for such a pardner!

Blest be the day o' sacred mirth
That gave my dear companion birth,
Let men rejoice while Silly sings
The bliss her precious Shadrack brings.

XXII.

Aunt Maguire's Experience.

DON'T care a snap for him, hey? Now Nancy Harrington, I want to know if you think you 're a gwine to make me believe such a story as that? I know *better*. I can see as fur into a millstone as any body—and I know and have know'd for better 'n six months how 't you and Jasper Doolittle tuck a notion to one another. 'T is extrawnary how gals will talk! If you don't care a snap for him, what makes you go with him to lecters, and concerts, and sleigh-rides, and all kind o' dewins? Don't tell *me* you don't care a snap for him. He 's a real nice young man tew—stiddy and industrus and dewin' well—you never 'll have a better chance in yer life—mabby he hain't said nothin' partickler to you yet—but that 's no sign he ain't a gwine tew as soon as he gits his curridge up. He 's ruther bashful, you know—it takes them sort o' fellers longer to come to the pint in such matters, they want considerable spurrin' up, and I advise you not to let nobody else hear you say you don't care nothin' about Jasper Doolittle—trouble

comes o' them kind o' speeches. I know by experience—I come purty nigh losin' yer Uncle Joshaway by makin' an unprudent remark o' that nater. I'll tell you how 't was, and mabby you 'll take warnin' by it. I remember egzackly when 't was—'t was in the month o' March, about tew year and a half arter Sister Bedott was married; yer uncle and me 'd ben keepin' company all winter: he come t' our house every Sabberday evenin' regularly, besides always seein' me hum from singin'-school and evenin' meetins, and so forth—'t was town talk that we was engaged—Joshaway Magwire and Melissy Poole—that was the story all round. But all this time, mind you—he hadent said a word tew me about havin' on him, though I was suspectin' every day when he would. You see he was awful bashful. Well, one night ('t was in the month o' March), we was gwine hum from singin'-school—nary one on us dident say nothin' for some ways. At last yer uncle ham'd and haw'd tew or three times, and then says he to me, says he, "Melissy!" says I, "Hey?"—but he dident continner for some time—arter a spell he ham'd and haw'd agin—and he says to me, says he, "Melissy!" says I, "Well—what?" but still he dident continner. At last I see we was a gittin' purty nigh hum—so I says to him, say I, "Joshaway—what was you a gwine to remark?" So then he says, says he, "I was a gwine to say—" but his curridge failed and he dident finish.

Afore long we come to the gate, and there we stopt (we used to stop awhile at the gate in a gineral way), and says he, "Melissy!" says I, "Joshaway Maguire, what *dew* you want?" "Why," says he," "I was a gwine to ax you—." Jest then yer granf'ther Poole opened the door and came out, and so yer uncle went off and I went in. Well—next day Hanner Canoot come in t' our house—and she begun to joke me about yer uncle—now I never *could* bear Hanner Canoot—she was a reglar mischief-makin' old maid—always a meddlin' with every body's bizness in the place—and sure as she see a young cupple appearantly attached to one another, she 'd insiniwate sutin' or other against 'em. She couldent git no sweetheart herself, and it made her awful cross-grained and mad at them as *could* git 'em. I hadent never had no diffikilty with her—but I dispised her—and yer gram'ther Poole used to say to me frequently, "Melissy, dew be keerful what you say afore Hanner Canoot—she 's a dangerous critter"—and I *was* kerful in a gineral way. And then, you see, ther was another thing about it—there was her brother, Josiar Canoot—he 'd ben tryin' to be perlite to me tew or three year—and I wouldent keep company with him, nor have nothin' to say tew him—and Hanner she know'd it, and felt awful spiteful to me on account o' *that*. Speakin o' Siar Canoot—the last time I was up to Wiggletown, yer Aunt Bedoot telled me he was

quite pertickler to her. He hain't never ben married. I s'pose nobody wouldent have him—he was so lazy and so consarned disagreeable and so awful humbly. Why his hair was as read as blazes—and he hadent no nose at all—and what ther was on 't turned right up straight. When yer Aunt Bedott tell'd me about his steppin' up to her, I say, says I, "I hope you won't incurridge him, Silly—for he 's a poor shiftless critter." "Why no he ain't, nother," says she, "he 's ben in the millentary and got to be Cappen Canoot." "I don't care for that," says I; "'t wouldent make no difference to me if he was *gineral*—he 's Si Canoot and always will be." Well, I felt awful worried about it, and when I come hum, I telled yer uncle on 't, and says he, "O don't you be afeard o' Silly's marryin' him. I'll be bound *he* hain't no idee o' marryin' *her*. She always thinks the men has serus intentions if they look at her"—that's what yer *uncle* said—and I don't say but what *'t is* so—Sister Bedott 's a curus critter—tho' she 's a nice woman in the main. Well, I was a gwine to tell what Hanner said; she begun to joke me—and says she (I was a spinnin' on a gret wheel you know), well she begun at me and says she, "Melissy, they tell curus stories about you;" whiz—whiz—whiz went the wheel, and I pertended I dident hear her. Arter a spell she spoke up louder, and says she, "Melissy—they tell strange stories about you and Joshaway;" whiz—whiz—whiz went

the wheel. I made as if I dident hear a word, she said —so bymebye she turns to your gram'ther (she was a settin' there), and says she—"How is it, Miss Poole? when 's that are weddin' comin' on?" "What weddin?" says mother, says she. "Why, Melissy and Joshaway Magwire, beshure," says Hanner, says she. "Never—not as I knows on," says mother, says she, "I don't know nothin' about no such bizness." Well—she see she couldent git no satisfaction out o' mother, so she hollers to me agin, and says she, "seems to me yer ruther hard o' hearin' to-day, Melissy." Whiz-z-z-z-z went the wheel louder 'n ever, and I dident take no notice o' what she said. Purty soon she bawled out agin, and says she—"I guess what makes you so deef, you must a ketcht cold in yer head last night—'t was rather a long journey you tuck to git hum"—(you see yer uncle and me went hum by the turnpike instid o' gwine cross lots—but how the critter found it out dear knows). Well, I dident pay no 'tention, but I tell you I was a gittin' awful mad. Arter a spell she gits up and comes and dumps herself right down aside o' me, and says she, "Say, Melissy, dew tell when you and Joshaway 's a gwine to step off—he 's a very nice young man, tho' I guess he won't never set the river afire." When she said that, I was completely ryled up. I d ben a growin' madder and madder all the time—to think o' her tellin' right afore mother about our comin' hum

Hanner Cannoot—yer a meddling old maid, I wish you'd mind yer own bizness, and kem me alone about Josh. Maguire. I wouldn't wipe my old shoes on him.—Page 237.

by the turnpike—and then sayin' "he wouldent never set the river afire"—'t was tew much, I couldent hold in no longer; so I turned round and shook my wheel-pin in her face, and says I, "Hanner Canoot—yer a meddlin' old maid. I wish you'd mind yer own bizness and lem 'me alone about Josh Magwire—*I wouldent wipe my old shoes on him.*" Now what did the critter dew when I spoke so? Why she snorted right out a laffin, and says she, "O, don't git in a passion, Melissy—don't, dew keep your temper till yer married—dew." Purty soon she went hum. This was a Friday. Well—Sabberday come and I dident see nothin o' Joshaway. I thought 't was ruther queer, but I reckon'd on seein' on him to Wensday evenin' meetin'—so I waited with patience till Wensday evenin' come, and I went to meetin'. Well, he was there, and I s'posed of course he'd wait on me hum—but when meetin' was out, lo and behold! he went straight apas me and axed Cloey Foggerson if he should have the pleasure o' seein' *her* hum! Then it all come thro' my head like a flash o' lightnin', what I said to Hanner Canoot—and I know'd she 'd told him on 't as well as if I 'd heerd her. I tell you I felt like death! I never know'd till that minnit how much I sot by Joshaway Magwire—the idee o' loosin' on him was awful aggravatin'.

Well, I got hum somehow or other and went straight off to bed—but I dident sleep nun that night

In the mornin' I got up with a tremenjuous headache, and lookin' as pale as a ghost. Mother, she axed me whether or no I wa'n't sick. I telled her no; but all that day I wa'n't fit for no bizness—dident have no appertite—and when night come yer gram'ther felt so consarned about me, she gin me a dose o' perrigarlick—cause she said if I dident sleep that night I'd sartinly be attacked with the fever. In spite o' the perrigarlick I dident sleep a wink *that* night nother. Next day I felt woss than ever, but I was awful high sperrited, and I was detarmined nobody shouldent know the reason. Thinks me if Joshaway 's a mind to use me so, he may and be hanged to him. I ain't a gwine to kill myself on account o' him—he ain't the only young man in the univarse. That was the way I *talked*—to myself—but talkin' and dewin 's tew things, you know, Nancy. The more I tried to despise yer uncle, the more I couldent—the more I tried to hate him the better I liked him. Well, so it went on for a number o' weeks. Yer uncle never come nigh me. I used to see him to singin' school and meetin', but he never offered to see me hum—always went with Cloey Foggerson. Afore long, every body was a talkin' about him and Cloey Foggerson. But what worked me most was—the gals begun to blagguard me about losin' my sweetheart, and thinks me, I'll git him back if I die for 't. So arter ponderin' on't a spell, I made up mind I'd incurridge Siar

Canoot, and see 'f *that* wouldent bring yer uncle tew. Si was ready enough to step up, you know, but I'd gi'n him the mitten so many times, he was afeard to ventur. So one day I goes by his shop (he was a waggin-maker by trade, you know)—he was a standin' in the door as he always was—in a gineral way—(he was everlastin' lazy)—well, I says, says I, "How do dew, Mr. Canoot?" I tell you I never see a surprisder critter 'n what he was—I hadent spoke tew him in better 'n a year. "Well as common," says he. Says I, "Why don't you never come to see us now days, Mr. Canoot?" The critter was mighty tickled—and says he—"The reason I hain't ben 's cause I reckoned my company wa'n't agreeable." "O! Mr. Canoot, you mustent think so," says I—and then I went off. Well, next night he come t' our house, and arter that he come every night—and I tell you 't was an awful cross to me to treat him any way decent—for I hated the critter like pizen: but I managed to be perlite tew him, and afore a week's time he poppt the question. I tell'd him 't was very onexpected and I must consider on 't a spell afore I gin him an anser. He seemed appearantly satisfied, and continnerd to wait on me; and I could see 't yer uncle felt oneasy by the way he lookt sideways at us whenever he see us together—but still he never come nigh me nor offered tew speak tew me—and so it went on for tew hull months. All the nabors begun to talk about

Josiar Canoot and me—and Siar himself was a teazin on me to know whether I hadent *considered* eny most long enough—and what to dew I dident know. I was nigh upon crazy—my health failed—I hadent no appetite, nor no sperrits. Yer gram'ther was awful oneasy about me. You see I was all the darter she had left to hum. Yer mar was married and gone, and yer Aunt Bedott was married and gone tew. Well, I got to be a miserable critter. One evening, arter supper, I was in a dretful state o' mind. I know'd Siar was a comin' that night to git his anser, and I wanted to git red on him. So I huv on my things and slipt out and went up to Sister Bedott's. She lived to the upper eend o' the village. Well, I found yer Aunt Bedott to hum alone. Yer Uncle Hez wa'n't in—gone to some meetin' or other—and Kiar (he was a baby then), he was asleep in the cradle. "I'm glad you've cum," says Silly, says she, "for I'm awful lonesome. Hez has gun off somewher—dear knows wher: 'tis amazin' how any man *can* be willin' to leave his pardner alone as much as he does. I'm clear out o' patience with it—if it hadent a ben for that flambergasted young one's havin' the snuffles, I'd a went off somewher myself." (Yer Aunt Bedott's a nice woman, but she was always an awful grumbler—they *dew* say she jawed the deacon out o' the world.) Well, so she went on scoldin' and frettin' and tellin' her troubles and trials, for ever so

long: at last I broke in, and says I, "O! Silly, don't go on so—*you* dont know what *trouble* is." I said it in a kind o' way that startled her, and says she, "Melissy, what dew you mean?" I bust right out a cryin'. Yer aunt huv down her knittin' work and come up tew me, and says she, "Melissy Poole, what *is* the matter?" I kept on a cryin' and dident anser. At last say she, "Dew tell what ails you, Melissy, dew—'t ain't nothin' about Joshaway Magwire, I hope. I wouldent fret my gizzard for him; ther 's as good fishes in the sea as any 't ever was ketcht yit." Well, arter a spell thinks me—I may as well tell her. So I telled her the hull from beginning to eend—how nigh yer uncle come to poppin' the question—what I said to Hanner Canoot—how she provoked me to say it—how ondoubtedly she 'd told Joshaway on 't—and all how and about it. Well, at fust yer aunt blowed me up sky high, for makin' such an unprudent speech (she was unprudent enough herself, but she hadent no patience with any body else for bein' so). At last says she, "What 's said can't be onsaid—the only way to mend the mischief is for Joshaway and you to git together and make it up somehow." "But how *can* we git together," says I; "I can't go to see him, and he don't never come to see me no more." Arter thinkin' a spell, says Silly, says she (Silly was always a cunnin' critter), "I've got it now; you jest stay here and see to the baby, and I 'll run into the Widder

Magwire's—it 's a good while sence I've been there It 's purty dark now, and by the time I come hum it 'll be awful dark, and Joshaway he 'll come with me—he 's did it several times—he 's wonderful perlite—and when we git to the door I 'll ax him to come in and see husband. Hez won't be to hum 'tain't likely—but Josh won't know but what he is—and when he once gits in, I' ll bet forty gret apples you and he 'll make it all straight purty soon." "O, Silly," says I, "that 's a real good idee—but you mustent let him know I 'm here, cause if you dew he won't come in." "I won't, sartin sure," says she. So she put on her things and off she went, and I sot down the back side o' the room and begun a contrivin' what I should say to yer uncle. O, Nancy! you 've no idee what a state of preturbation I was in—one minnit I was afeard I shouldent say nothin' to no purpose—and the next minnit I was eny most sure o' gittin' Joshaway back agin. Well, Sister Bedott was gone a hull hour. You see Joshaway wa'n't to hum when she went, and so she stayed till he come. It did seem to me as if she was gone a year. At last I heerd 'em a comin'. They got to the door and says yer uncle, says he, "Good night." "O, you come in, dew," says yer Aunt Silly, says she; "Mr. Bedott wants to see you amazinly." "Well," says he, "I 'll step in a minnit." So in they come. "Why," says Sister Bedott, says she, "I wonder where husband is! you set down by

the fire and I'll go call him.—he can't be fur off, I'm sure; he wouldent go off and leave the baby alone." So he sot down with his back to me—(I was a settin where he dident see me), and she went off into t' other room and shot the door. Gracious sakes alive! I never in my hull life experienced such feelins as I did that minnit—and I never shall agin if I live a thous and year. It seem'd as if my heart would jump right out o' my mouth. Arter a minnit or so I *ham'd*—yer uncle he started and lookt round—and when he see me he riz up and made for the door. Thinks me, I've lost him now sartain, sure. Jest as he got his hand on the latch, says I, "Mr. Magwire!" He stopt and lookt round at me, and says he, "Did you speak to me, Miss Poole?" "Yes," says I. "What did you want?" says he;—he spoke so cold and onconsarned, I felt clear discurridged, and I jest bust right out a cryin'. So then he come up to me, and says he, "Melissy!" Says I, "Joshaway, what makes you so cold and distant to me lately?" Says he, "You're engaged, ain't you, Melissy?" Says, I "No I ain't—no such a thing." Arter a minnit he says, says he, "What made you say you wouldent wipe yer old shoes on me?" "Cause I *wouldent*," says I, "and ther ain't but one feller in the town I *would* sarve such a mean trick, and that's Siar Canoot—he's jest fit to wipe old shoes on." Now Nancy what do you s'poze yer uncle done then? Why he huv his arms round

my neck, and giv me such a thunderin' smack as I never got afore nor sence. "O, Melissy," says he, "we 'll be married arter all the fuss—won't we?" "I shouldent wonder," says I. And we *was* married in less than a month, and I hain't never had no 'casion to repent—for he 's made me a fust rate husband; but only think how nigh I come to losin' on him jest for speakin' as I did to Hanner Canoot. She hain't never ben nigh me sence I was married—and as for Siar, he was as mad as the Dragon.

XXIII.

Aunt Maguires Description of the Donation Party.

SEE it 's about year since you was here, ain't it, Nancy? 'T wa'n't long afore you was married, I know. Well, ther 's been some changes here since then. We 've lost our old minister, Parson Scrantum, and got a new one. He seems to be a very good man, Parson Tuttle does—quite young yet—jest begun to preach, hain't ben married but a little while. And his wife appeared like a nice woman, tew. But I feel sorry for 'em. This is a trying place for a minister, and a minister's wife, tew. Though I don't know but what all places are jest so. All goes on slick enough yet—but I 'm afeard 't won't last long. They hain't ben here but three months—and the folks are makin' a terrible fuss over 'em. You know it 's the way they always dew when they git a new minister. They 're ready to eat him up for a spell. And his wife—lawful sakes! ther 's nothing equil tew her. They make an awful parade about her. Such treatment spiles the minister's wives. Afore long they begin to think

themselves the most important characters in creation—and really expect the hull community to be a flyin' round all the time to attend tew 'em. And 't ain't at all surprisin' it should be so—it 's accordin' to natur. But after a spell, the minister gits to be an old story, and the people begin to find fault with him. Some think he 's gittin' wonderful tejus; some think he ain't gifted in prayer, and he ain't sperritual minded enough to suit some others. But the most gineral complaint is, that he don't visit enough. As if a minister could write tew sarmons a week—sometimes three—and go a visitin' every day besides. And then his wife—'t is astonishin' how public opinion changes consarnin' her The *upper crust* begin to think she 's a troublesome helpless critter. Say she depends on the congregation to take care of her, and all *that.* They pick flaws in every thing she says and does. And the *under* crust call her proud—say she visits Miss *This*, and don't visit Miss *That.* If she invites some of her neighbors to drink tea with her—some o' the rest 'll be mad, because she left *them* out, and say, she feels above 'em. And so it goes on—gittin' woss and woss—she can't please nobody. After a spell, the deacons begin to hint to the minister that it 's *gittin' ruther hard* to raise his salary, and wonder whether or no he could n't *live* on *less.* If he thinks he could n't, they wonder whether or no he could n't *dew more good* in some other place. So at last they drive him to ax a dismission, and the

poor man takes his family and goes off somewhere else, to go through with the same trials and troubles over again. And after they 've been settled about a dozen times, the minister begins to find out that all ain't gold that glitters; and his wife if she is a woman o' sense—discovers that she ain't a supernatral being and must take care of herself, like other folks.

That 's the experience o' ministers in gineral. I know it by my own observation—and I 'm sure it had ben the case with the Scrantums. They 'd ben settled in a number o' places afore they come here; and Miss Scrantum, herself, told me that it took her a good while to larn that a minister's life must be a life o' trial and self-denial. But she did larn it at last. Miss Scrantum was an excellent woman. She wa'n't no gadder nor no gossipper. She stayed to hum and took care of her husband and children. If any body was sick or sufferin', she was there to help 'em; but she seldom went out any other time. She was good to the poor, tew—and divided her mite with 'em. You 'd a thought folks couldent find fault with *her*. But they did. Some grumbled because she w'n't more sociable—and some was mad because she wa'n't what they called an *active Christian*—that is—she wa'n't willin' to spend the heft o' her time a runnin' round on missionary bisness and distribitin' tracts, and so forth. But *every body* was outrageous at her, cause she tried to reconcile Liddy Ann Buel and Deacon Fustick's

wife—instid o' takin' sides with ary one on 'em—when they had that awful quarrel about the ostridge feathers. But I thought—and think yet—that Miss Scrantum acted jest as a Christian ought to act in that bizness, though every body else blamed her; and Liddy Ann and Miss Fustick got as mad at her as they was at one another.

Parson Scrantum was a good man, tew—and a smart man—they dident know how to vally him here. To be sure he went away of his own accord; but I s'pose if he 'd a wanted to stay, they 'd a druv him off afore long—jest as they always dew—for husband said they was beginnin' to growl about payin' the salary. I tell ye, I felt dretful sorry when they went away, and so did yer uncle—we sot a great deal by 'em. And then they had such a nice family o' children. Susan, the oldest, is as nice a gal as ever I know'd. I took a wonderful likin' tew her. Her mother used to let her come in often and set a spell with me. I was awful lonesome after Jefferson went off to study to be a doctor. Yer uncle was in the shop biggest part o' the day, and I used to be here all stark alone a good deal o' the time; and when Miss Scrantum found out how lonesome I was she used to send Susan over sometimes to see me She 'd fetch her sewin' or her knittin' and stay an hour or tew, and sometimes she 'd fetch a book and read tew me, and it used to chirk me up wonderfully. And Mr Scrantum,

he used to come in once in a while, and always had somethin' good to say.

"You said he went away of his own accord, aunt; how did it happen?"

Well, I'll tell ye. When they gin him a call to settle here, they agreed to give him four hundred dollars a year and a donation party every winter. Well, he thought he could live on that. Four hundred dollars was purty small, to be sure, but then they was very equinomical and industrious—dident keep no hired help—Miss Scrantum and Susan done all the work themselves. And they thought the donation party would be quite a help—they never 'd had none—they wa'n't customary where they come from. Well, they managed to git along through the summer and fall. (They come here in the spring o' the year.) In December follerin', the congregation gin 'em their first donation party. I dident go; I never had ben to none; used to kind o' want to go sometimes—but yer uncle wa'n't willin' to have me—he never approved o' them givin' visits. He thinks that when the people want to make their minister a present, they 'd ought to give it in a private way, and not go and turn his house upside down, to dew it. So I dident go to that one. But I don't think the Scrantums thought any the less of us for it; for they know'd we was as willin' to dew well by 'em as any o' the congregation was, for yer uncle always paid his pew rent promptly, and that 's more 'n

some that was richer done. And, besides that, we often sent 'em presents. They always looked upon us as the best friends they had here.

Well, never heerd how the donation party come out. Miss Scrantum never said nothing about it, and I never axed her no questions; only I know that through the rest o' the winter the minister's folks seemed to be more pinched than ever. I was in there quite often, and though they dident make no complaints, I could see plain enough that they had to scrimp and save, and patch and turn every way, to keep any how comfortable; for they had house-rent to pay, and six children to support, and it takes considerable to *feed* so many, to say nothin' o' clothin' and eddicatin' on 'em. They had a good deal o' company, tew, and that costs something. You see they had to entertain all the stragglin' agents that come along, for all sorts o' societies in creation. They 'd stop there to save payin' tavern bills. It 's the way they always dew, ye know. Well, they contrived to live along till the next winter. The time come round for another donation party; and I says to yer uncle, says I—"Husband, I wan't to go to that givin' visit." "O, shaw," says he, "what do you want to go for?" "O, says I, "'cause I think so much o' the minister's folks." "Well," says he, "that 's the principal reason why *I* should want to *stay away* from the givin' visit myself, as for you—of course you can do as ye please."

"Well, then," says I, "if you hain't no objections, I'll go; and I wish you'd go tew, jest for once. 'T ain't no use to ax *me* to go," says he; "it 's aginst my prin ciples; I always mean to dew all I 'm able to support the Gospel and help the minister; but as for them *bees*—I won't countenance 'em by my presence—that's all; and let me tell ye one thing, if you go, I 'll bet a cookey you 'll wish you hadent a went afterward." "Well that 's *my* look out," says I. "If you 're willin'—I 'll go." "And what 'll ye take?" says he, "a stick o' tape, or a pint of emptins, or what?" "No, I won't," says I, "I 'll take something o' more vally than *that*." "Then you 'll be *odd*," says he.

So after considerin' a spell, I concluded to git, what Miss Scrantum needed about as much as any thing, and that was a new bunnit. She wore a shabby, faded old thing, that looked as if it came over in the ark. Well, I thought I could git a ginteeler one in Harristown, than I could by havin' on 't made here. So I got yer uncle to harness up the hoss for me, one afternoon, and bein' as he was tew busy to go with me himself, I went over and axed Susan Scrantum to go 'long; I thought she could help me about pickin' on 't out. She 'd be likely to know what would suit her mother. So I goes over and calls for Susan. She was delighted to go—she dident git a chance to ride very often. Well, we druv to Harristown, and went into the best lookin' milliner's shop ther was there. "Now, Susy,"

says I "I'm a gwine to git a new bunnit, and I want your advice about what to choose." "Why, Miss Magwire," says she, "I thought you had quite a nice one a ready." "Well, it is middlin' nice," says I, "but I've wore it tew winters, and some ladies gits a new one every winter, ye know." So we examined all the bunnits in the shop, and I axed Susan which she liked the best. "I should think *that* one would be very purty for you," says she, pintin' to a plum-colored satin one that hung on a peg. "It's ma's favorite color, and that makes me like it." Now that was jest what I wanted to know. So I axed the milliner to hand it down, and I tried it on, for I reckoned if 't would fit me, 't would fit Miss Scrantum—she was about my size—and it did fit nicely, so I bought it. I had to pay six dollars for 't—quite a launch out for me—more 'n ever I paid for a bunnit for myself. Susan looked as if she thought I was ruther extravagant, but she did n't say nothing. Well, I put it in a bandbox I fetcht, and we went hum. When yer uncle come in I showed it tew him, and he was quite pleasd with it; and *'t was* a clear beauty, plum-colored satin, trimmed off with a ribbin the same color, and lace borderin', with white satin bows between, all quilled round the inside. I axed yer uncle if 't was more expensive than he was willin' I should give. "No," says he, "I don't begrudge the money. I want you to dew the hansome thing: but 't would suit me a great deal bet

ter if you wait till the next day and then take it over." "O husband," says I, "I've got my heart sot on attendin' the party; dew lemme go." "Well, go," says he, "if you're beset tew; but mark my words, I'll bet a dollar you'll wish you had n't a went."

Well, the day afore the party Jefferson come hum to stay a few days. I told him I was gwine to the donation party, and he said he'd like no better fun than to go with me. Jeff's always ready to go, you know. So he went and got a ream o' nice paper for the parson to write his sermons on. At last the day came, and I and Jeff, we started off for the party. We went quite early in the evenin', for I wanted to be there 'fore 't was crowded. Ther hadent nobody come when we got there, only three or four ladies, that was a gittin' the supper ready. There was Glory Ann Billins, and Polly Mariar Stillman, and Jo Gipson's wife, and old mother Parker a settin' the table. You know at them kind o' dewins they always have a supper sot for the company. The congregation provides the entertainment ginerally, but in this place the minister's wife has to find a good share on 't. Miss Scrantum found the tea and coffee, and sugar and cream, and butter, and so forth. Some o' the neighbors sent in cake and pies, and cheese and biscuit. But Miss Scrantum was afeared ther wouldent be enough o' the cake and pies—so she sent to the baker's and got a mess more. Well, I axed Miss Gipson

where we should put our donations, and she told us to take 'em in the parlor and lay 'em on the table. Ther was a table there a purpose to put the dry goods on. The provisions was carried into the store-room. So we went in there and laid 'em on the table. The bunnit was pinned up in a newspaper. Jeff he sot down, and I started off to find Miss Scrantum. I found her in the kitchen a makin' coffee. She looked dretful tired and beat out. I was real sorry I hadent a went sooner and helped her. She was wonderful glad to see me; and I told her to go and dress herself, and I 'd make the coffee. So she thanked me and went—and I took hold and made the coffee. Ther was an awful sight on 't; I never made so much afore in all my born days, and I never expect to agin. 'T was made in Miss Scrantum's biler. She 'd scoured it up for the occasion. 'T was a biler that held ten pails full—and it was brimmin full o' coffee. After I 'd got it made, I went back into the sittin'-room. They 'd got the table all sot. Ther was lots o' cake, and biscuit, and pies, and cold meat, and all sorts o' stuff. Then I went into the parlor, and lo and behold, Jo Gipson's wife and Miss Parker had ondid the bunnit, and was admirin' on 't at a wonderful rate. Jest then Mr. and Miss Scrantum and the children come in, and dear me! how pleased they were with the bunnit. Miss Scrantum, she tried it on, and it fitted her to a T. But Susan! you 'd ought to seen Susan! She jumped

and frisked around, and Iident hardly know what to dew with herself, she was so delighted. "O, Miss Magwire," says she, "that beautiful bunnit was n't for you after all, was it? What a dear good woman you 'ere to make ma such a fine present. She 'll look as nice as any body now—won't you ma?" They seemed wonderful pleased to see Jefferson, tew; and Mr. Scrantum was very glad to git the paper—said 't was jist what he wanted. Well, purty soon the company begun to come, and they come pourin' in thicker and faster till the house was crammed. The settin'-room door was locked, so as to keep 'em out o' there till supper was ready—and I tell ye all the rest o' the house was jest as full as it could stick. The parlor and the hall and the bed-rooms was all crowded and crammed. You 'd a thought from the number o' folks that was there, that ther 'd been a wonderful sight o' donations brought—but as true as I 'm a livin' critter —that table wa'n't half full. But then ther was a good many families that fetcht one article to answer for the hull. For instance, Deacon Skinner and his wife and four darters and tew sons was all there—and Miss Skinner fetcht a skein o' yarn to knit Parson Scrantum some socks. Miss Hopkins and her three darters and her son and his wife, that was a visitin' her, and *their* three children all come—and Miss Hopkins brought half a pound o' tea. And the Runyons with their four young ones—what do you think they

brought? why, Miss Runyon fetcht a little fancy basket to stick on the center-table and put visitin' cards in. And the Miss Footes, three on 'em they brought Miss Scrantum a pair o' cuffs. And all the Binghams, they fetcht a neck ribbon for Susan. And Deacon Peabody and his tribe, ther 's as much as a dozen on 'em, they brought a small cheese. I heerd afterward that half o' it was a donation and t' other half was to go for pew rent. And Cappen Smalley and all his children was there. He fetch a box o' raisins out o' his store, ther was twelve pound in 't, and Susan told me afterward that ten pound was to go toward pew rent and the rest was a present. The Widder Grimes and Charity was there, of course. They dident go nigh the donation table for some time, and I was kind o' curus to know whether they 'd brought any thing, and so I watch'd 'em, and bimebye, I observed Charity go up slily, when she thought nobody did n't see, and lay a little paper on the table. I had the curiosity to see what was in it, so as soon as I got a chance I took up the paper and peeped into 't, and lo and behold! there were two skeins o' thread! did you ever? Widder Grimes is well off, but she 's tew stingy to be decent, and Charity 's jest like her. Then there was ever so many belonging to other denominations, that dident bring nothin'; they come to show their good will, to let folks see that *they* wa'n't bigoted and prejudiced though they did differ in a religious

pint o' view, and git their supper. And besides them, I noticed a great many that I never see before—nobody knows where they come from nor where they went tew. I guess they must a been raised up for the occasion. And then ther was an awful sight c' children that straggled in from every where. Doctor Lippincott, he was there, bowin' and scrapin' round as usual—awfully anxious about every body's health; and his wife, tew, as much consarned as he was—and their promisin' red-headed boy, and interestin' darter, Anny Marier, with her six starched skirts on—takin' up more room than ary ten decent drest girls in the room. The doctor always goes to all the donation parties for fifteen miles round, to make himself popilar, but nobody knows of his ever takin' any thin'. On this occasion, Anny Mariar took a *book-mark* to Mr. Scrantum, with a thing on it that looked like a *choppin'-knife*, and a mess o' French nonsense below it But the greatest part o' the performance was the seminary gals and their donation. Ther was twenty-five on 'em, and what do you suppose they fetcht? Why, the hull kit and cargo on 'em had conspired together and made a rag baby for little Adeline Scrantum, and rigged it up in gauze and tinsel, and they all come together and brought *that*. Miss Pinchem, their teacher, wa'n't there. She was sick o' somethin'. I guess if she had a come, she 'd a kept 'em a little straighter. Land o' liberty! I never see such an

actin' set o' critters in all my born days! They carried on like all possest. I see some on 'em a flourishin' round Jeff—he 's always ready for a scrape, you know—and I was afeared he 'd git to carryin' on with 'em and I wouldent a had him for any thing, so I gin him a caution. "Jeff," says I, "you let them seminary galls alone; they 're a wild set; 't ain't proper to cut up so in the minister's house." Jeff promised to keep clear on 'em—he generally does as I want him tew. I 'll say that much for Jefferson, he 's always been good about mindin'. But it went hard with him to dew it then; he was ripe for fun, and determined to let off the steam some way or other. So he looks round and he sees Charity Grimes stuck up on the settee 't other side o' the room. Stiff as a poker and prim as a pea-pod—you know what a starched up, affected old critter she is. Jeff went to school tew her when he was little and she snapped his ears and cuffed him round, so he 's always hated her like pizen ever since. She 's ben tryin' this twenty year to git married and can't make it out. She 'd chased after 'Squire Fuller ever since his wife died. Squire Fuller got married about a month afore that—and yer uncle says he verily believes he did it in self-defense, jest to get rid o' Charity Grimes—she bother'd him to death; he couldent go out in company but what she 'd contrive to hook on to him. He 's a very perlite man, the Squire is, and he dident want tew be

rude to her, but he couldent bear her, though she tried hard to make folks think he was her beaux. At last he got married, quite suddenly, to a young woman in Chenang county; and yer uncle says he don't believe he 'd a done it, if it hadent a ben to get rid o' Charity Grimes; for his wife had ben dead five year, and he seemed to be uncommon contented *for a widdiwer*. But I was gwine to tell you what Jeff done. He see Charity a sittin' there a tryin' to dew the agreeable to Cappen Smalley (*his* wife hadent been dead long—by the way, they 'd make a good match, wouldent they?) Well, Jeff says to me, says he—"Mother, may I go *stir up* Charity Grimes?" "I don't know what you mean by stirrin' on her up," says I. "O," says he, "I jest want to condole with her a little on the loss o' Squire Fuller." "No," says I, "you needent dew no such thing; 't would be very improper, indeed, and very aggravatin', tew." "Well," says he, "may n't I jest go and talk a little Shakespeare tew her? (Jeff 's always quotin' Shakespeare, you know.) "I 'm afeerd you 'll say something sassy," says I. "No I won't," says he. "I 'll be all-killin' perlite." "Well go, then," says I. So off he steps, demure as a deacon. "Good evenin', Miss Grimes," says he. "Good evenin', Mr. Magwire," says she. "It seems like old times to see you agin," says he; and then he obsarved to Cappen Smalley—"I used to go to school to Miss Grimes when I was young."

Charity puckered up her mouth and grinned, and says she. "Yes, you was quite a boy then—and I was a mere child myself, exceedingly youthful for a teacher." "Well," says Jeff, says he, "you hain't altered a spek since—you hold your own amazingly—you looked every bit as old then as you dew now; but how do you *feel* about these days?" "Feel!" says she, pickin' up her ears, "I feel as well as common—why shouldent I?" "Excuse me," says Jeff, "I only axed because I did n't know but you felt ruther nonplussed, put to 't for business as it were, since Squire Fuller got married. 'Old feller's ocerpation 's gone' now, I s'pose, as Shakespeare says." Gracious! how mad Charity was! She brustled up like a settin' hen, and, says she—"Jeff Magwire, I don't care a straw for what Shakespeare nor none o' the rest o' your rowdy acquaintances says about me, I 'm above it; but whoever he is, you may tell him he 's an impudent puppy, for callin' a *young lady* an *old feller*—and you 're another for tellin' on 't." So she got up and flounced out into the hall. The folks all giggled and seemed wonderful tickled; but Jeff, he looked round as astonished as he could be, and says he—"I wonder what ails Miss Grimes. I thought for the life o' me she was a gwine to snap my ears, as she used to when I was young." I was vexed at Jeff, and took him to task as soon as I got a chance; but he declared

't wa'n't "*old fèller*" he said, but somethin' else—however, it sounded jest like it, any way.

Just then the door was thrown open, and we was invited out to supper. So we went squeezin' and crowdin' into the settin'-room. Some o' the folks pushed and jammed as if they were afeared they shouldent git the best chance. Glory Ann Billins sot at one end o' the table a pourin' coffee, and Jo Gipson's wife at the 't other end a pourin' tea; and I tell ye, 't was as much as ever they could dew to pour it fast enough. Jeff, he flew round and helped the ladies. For my part, I dident feel like eatin' much—I was jammed up agin the wall and couldent stir hand nor foot. So I told Jeff to fetch me a cup o' tea and nut-cake, and he did; and I took 'em and managed to eat the nut-cake, but somebody hit my elbow and made me spill the heft o' the tea; so I stood and held my empty cup, and looked on to see the performance. I say for 't if 't wa'n't worth seein', I'm mistaken. Why, if I was a starvin' to death, I shouldent be willin' to act as some o' them folks did. They pushed, and elbowed, and pulled, and hauled, and grabbed like crazy critters. 'T was amusin' to see 'em put down the vittals—I 'd a gin a sixpence, Nancy to had you there; 't would a ben fun for you to look on and see the dewins. You 'd a thought the biggest part o' the company hadent had nothin' to eat since the last

donation party, and dident expect to have nothin more till the next one.

The wimmin, as a general thing, took tea, and eat the cake and pies, and so forth. And the men, they let into the coffee, and biscuit, and cheese, and cold meat, and such like. I actilly see Deacon Skinner drink six cups o' coffee, and eat in proportion. And Dr. Lippincott, my grief! 't was perfectly astonishin' to me that one mortal body could hold as much as that man put in—no wonder he 's so fat—they say he gits the heft of his livin' away from home—contrives to git to one patient's house jest as dinner 's ready, and to another's jest at tea time, and so eats with 'em. And I wish you 'd a seen the Widder Grimes. Grammany! how the critter did stuff! I took partickler notice of her, and I see she had an awful great work-bag on her arm, and every little while she 'd contrive to tuck a piece into 't when she thought nobody wa'n't a lookin'. As soon as I got a chance, I hunched Jeff, and says I—"For pitty 's sake, Jeff, do obsarve the Widder Grimes." So Jeff, he watched her a spell. "By George!" says he, "if that ain't rich!" I tell ye, 't was fun for Jeff. Bimeby—after she 'd got her bag purty well filled, says Jeff to me, says he—"Now, mother, may I stir her up a little?" "I don't care," says I. So he reached forrard and hollered across the table tew her, loud enough for every body to hear—"Miss Grimes, may I come to your party?" "My

party?" says she; "what do you mean?" "Why," says Jeff, says he, "I reckoned from the size o' your bag, and the quantity o' provissions you was a layin' in, that you was a calculatin' to make a party, and I thought I'd like to come." Every body looked at Miss Grimes; and, I tell ye, she looked as if she'd like to crawl into some knot-hole—and I don't know but what she did, for she made her disappearance amazin' soon after. And, then, them seminary gals—gracious! how they did eat! I s'pose they was half-starved at Miss Pinchem's. Afore long the table was purty well cleared, and Miss Scrantum had to go to the buttry and bring on all 't was left. I guess every thing in the house that could be eat, without stoppin' to cook it, was made way with that night. When the seminary gals had eat all they wanted, they amused themselves a throwin' hunks o' cheese and buttered biscuit at the young men. After most o' the other eatables had been disposed of, Dave Runyon, great gump! went into the buttry and brought out the box o' raisins that was to go toward Cappen Smalley's pew-rent, and handed 'em round. Every body grabbed, especially the seminary gals, and children, till ther wa'n't one left in the box. When supper was about finished, Jane Elizy Fustick (she's always a tryin' to dew something cunnin'), she went into the store-room and got a chain o' sassages, that old Miss Crocker brought, and come along slily and throw'd

it round Liph Peabody's shoulders. Liph, he was a standin' by the tea board a drinkin' a cup o' coffee. When he felt the sassages come floppin' round his neck, he was skairt, and whisked round suddenly and hit the tea-board, and knocked it off onto the floor, and smash went every thing on it! What made it more aggravatin' was, ther was a dozen chany cups and sarcers on it that Miss Scrantum had fetcht out after the folks come out to supper. They was some that she sot a great deal by; her mother giv 'em tew her, and her mother was dead. She dident bring 'em on at first, for fear they 'd git broke. She sot on all her common crockery, and borrerd a good deal at Smalley's store, calculatin' if any on 't was broke to pay for 't. But when she see so many folks come crowdin' out, she was afeard ther wouldent be cups enough, so she fetcht out her mother's chany cups and sot 'em on the tea-board. But Glory Ann got along without usin' 'em, and there they sot, and when the tea-board fell, they fell tew, and every one on 'em was broke or cracked. Gracious! how Miss Scrantum looked when she see her precious chany all to pieces. She dident say a word, but her lips quivered, and she trembled all over. But she seemed to overcome it in a minnit, and went away and brought a basket and begun to pick up the pieces, and Jeff and I took hold and helped her. A good many o' the company had gone back into the parlor; but ther was enough left

to track the sassage round, and, my goodness! what work they made with 'em! While we was a pickin' up the crockery, all of a sudden ther was a terrible hullerballoo in the parlor—Jeff and me rushed in to see what was the matter, and gracious granfather! what do you s'pose it was? Why one o' them pesky seminary gals had throw'd a hunk o' cheese and hit Miss Scrantum's parlor lamp that was a settin' on the table, and knocked it over and broke it all to flinders. But that wa'n't the wost on 't—where it tumbled over it fell right onto that plum-colored sattin bunnit, and the ile run all over it in a minnit. Afore any body could ketch the bunnit, one side on 't, ribbon and all, was completely ruined. Such a sight as 't was, you never sot your tew lookin' eyes on! All the ile that dident go onto the bunnit was soaked up in the paper that Jeff took, that was a lyin' right aside on 't, and the biggest part o' that was spiled tew. My grief! how I *did* feel when I see that beautiful bunnit in such a condition! And poor Miss Scrantum turned pale as death, and Susan cried like every thing. I axed Sam Lippincott (the doctor's red-headed boy) who 't was that throwed the cheese—he pinted out the gal, and I goes up to her, and, says I—"You good-for-nothin' little huzzy hain't you no better manners than to be a throwin' cheese at other folkses lamps in that way?" She was a real sassy little thing, and dident care a straw for what she 'd done. She looked up and

grinned as imperdent as could be, and says she—"Excuse me, marm—I had n't the most remote idee o' hittin' the lamp. I meant to aim at Sam Lippincott's head, and mistook the lamp for it. I 'm sure you can't blame me for makin sich a *natral* mistake." Did you ever! I was a good mind to hit her a cuff aside o' the head, but I dident. I told Miss Pinchem on 't, though, the next day—and she punished the huzzy by keepin' her on bread and water a week. Jeff said 't was a very *equinomical* kind o' punishment. Well, the party broke up purty soon after this scrape, and Jeff and me went hum. Jeff went off to bed. Yer uncle was out; dear me! how I *did* dread meetin' him! Afore long he come in. "Well," says he, "how did the party go off?" "O, well enough," says I; "but I 'm tired and sleepy, and we won't talk about it to-night." The fact is, I felt tew mean to tell him the truth—but in the mornin', when Jeff come down, he let it all out. My grief! how yer uncle did crow over me. "Did n't I tell ye so?" says he; "don't ye wish you had n't a went?" "Yes," says I, "if it 's any satisfaction tew ye to know it—I *dew* wish so." "I know'd ye would," says he. I verily believe he was glad the bunnit got spiled.

The next mornin', as soon as I got my chores done up, I went over to Mr. Scrantum's to see how they come on, and help 'em regilate a little. Murder-alive! such a sight as that house was, from one end to t' other,

I never sot my tew lookin' eyes on! The carpets was all greased up with butter, and cheese, and sassages. And then the lamp ile had done more mischief than we know'd on the night afore. It had run off the table and made a cruel great spot on the best carpet; and I found Miss Scrantum a tryin' to wash it out I sot tew and helped her—but 't want no use—'t wouldent come out. Susan, she was a settin' on a little stool a scourin' teaspoons, and cryin' as if her heart would break. "What's the matter, dear?" says I—but the poor child couldent answer me. So her mother said she was a cryin' about the bunnit bein' spiled. "No wonder," says I, "it's enough to make any body cry. I s'pose you can't dew nothin' with the bunnit, can you?" "O, yes," says Miss Scrantum, says she; "I've ben lookin' at it this mornin', and I think I can get enough out of it to make a bag of. It 'll make a very nice bag—and I shall keep it as long as I live, for your sake, Miss Maguire." I looked at the woman with surprise. There she sot on the floor, a rubbin' away at that grease spot, and a talkin' as calmly about that six dollar bunnit, as if it hadent a cost more'n six cents. I was kind o' vexed a her for not makin' more fuss about it. I actilly begun to think she hadent no feelin', and dident care for nothing. "And then," says I, "to think o' their breakin' your beautiful chany—'t was shameful—a present from her mother tew; and you sot so

much by it; and I've heerd ye say 't was the last thing yer mother ever giv ye." I was a runnin' on in that way when I thought I heerd Miss Scrantum sob —I looked up and she was a cryin' dretfully. She couldent hold in no longer when I spoke o' the chany. I was sorry I said a word about it; but it convinced me that Miss Scrantum had feelins, deep feelins; but she 'd larn't to control 'em, poor woman! Well, I stayed a spell and helped 'em clean up, and then I went hum. Susan went to the door with me. When we got outside, I axed her whether ther was many provisions brought in the night afore. She told me to come to the store-room and look. So I went into 't and took a view, and there was tew or three punkins, a couple o' spare ribs (*spare* enough, tew, I tell ye), three or four cabbages, a chicken, what was left o' Deacon Peabody's cheese, and a codfish. "Is that all?" says I. "Yes," says Susan, "and half o' the cheese, and one o' the spare ribs and the chicken are to go for pew-rent—I heerd pa tell ma so; but you mustent let 'em know I told you about it—for they 'd think it wrong for me to speak of it; you won't tell em, will you, Miss Maguire?" "No, darlin'," says I, "I won't let it out." So I went hum—and as I went along considerin' the matter, I come to a *unanimous* conclusion in my own mind, that *donation parties was a humbug*

Well, the next Sunday Parson Scrantum requested

the male members of his congregation to meet him the next evenin' at the meetin'-house. Yer uncle went to the meetin'. I was in a wonderful fidgit to know what was the object on 't—and quite impatient for husband to come hum. When he come I obsarved he was oncommonly tickled about something. "What is the matter? dew tell, for pity's sake," says I. "Why, the minister's axed a dismission," says he. "You don't!" says I. "Jest so," says he; and then he haw-haw'd out a laffin. "What ails ye, man alive?" says I; "I don't see what ther is to laff at in that; for my part, I look upon 't as a great misfortin to Scrabble Hill, to lose such a minister as Parson Scrantum. I'm astonished to see you laff." "Well, you won't be," says he, "when I tell ye about the meetin'." So he went on and gin me the hull description. He said that when Mr. Scrantum told 'em he wanted a dismission, they was wonderful surprised—Deacon Skinner he riz and axed the reason. So Mr. Scrantum stated that he found it onpossible to support his family on his salary. Deacon Skinner said *that* was curus—he thought four hundred dollars was *purty well up*. Deacon Peabody said he thought so tew, especially with a *donation party* besides. Deacon Fustick, he put in, and said 't was ruther a queer time for a minister to complain of his congregation, jest after they 'd gin him a *bee*—and he axed Dr. Lippincott what was *his* opinion. (Now Dr Lippincott never had an opinion in all his

life, on any subject—if he had, he never expressed it for fear of injurin' his practice; 't ain't even known what his politics is—he always contrives to be away on election days.) So he hemmed and hawed, and said that really he had n't *made up his mind*—he hoped Mr. Scrantum 'preciated his donation party—he hoped the congregation 'preciated Mr. Scrantum; he wished—he wished things was n't sittiwated jest as they was sittiwated; and that was all they got out of *him*. Old Parker observed that minister's families, somehow, took more to support 'em than any body else. Mr. Scrantum said that his family was as equinomical as they could be, but he had a good many children, and 't was purty difficult to dew as he 'd ought tew by 'em on four hundred dollars a year; axed 'em whether they thought ary one o' them could dew it. Cappen Smalley, rich old curmudgin, stuck up his head and said he guessed *he* could dew it—any *reasonable* man could dew it—especially with the help of a donation party every year; but he hoped Mr. Scrantum's request would be granted unanimously for his part, he'd long ben of opinion they 'd ought to have a *cheaper* minister, and one that had n't such a snarl o' young ones. I don't s'pose Parson Scrantum would a said any thing severe if it hadent a ben for Cappen Smalley's speech. He seemed quite stirred up by it. He riz up considerable flustrated, and says he—"I thank God, that what ever else I lack, He has ben pleased to

give me plenty o' the *poor* man's blessins—yea, a quiver full of them. And it 's for their sakes, not my own, that I come here to-night. If I was alone in the world, I could and would dew on a' most nothing —though Scripter says the laborer is worthy of his hire. Brethren, since I come among you, I 've done my best to be a faithful pastor—if I 've failed I hope to be forgiven. At first I had an idee that I should be able to rub along, on my small salary; and I don't know, but I might a done it, if it had n't a ben for *one thing.*" Here he paused. "What was *that?*" says Deacon Peabody. Mr. Scrantum continued—"I've ben here tew years, and you 've had the kindness to give me tew donation parties. I've stood it so fur, but I can't stand it no longer; brethren, I feel convinced that *one more donation party* would completely *break me down.* I will now retire and leave the meetin' to decide as they see fit." Yer uncle said that for about five minutes after he went out universal silence prevailed. The first to speak was Deacon Skinner. "Strange!" says he. "Curus!" says Deacon Peabody. "*Ree*markable!" says Deacon Fustick. "Onaccountable!" says Cappen Smalley. "Singular circumstance!" says Dr Lippincott. Then yer uncle got up, and, says he—"Gentlemen, I don't see as any thing 's to be gained by settin' here and wonderin' all night. For my part, I think all Parson Scrantum 's said is true—his request is perfectly reasonable—and I

move it be put to vote." So 't was put to vote and granted.

A few days afterward the minister's folks packed up and started off for Miss Scrantum's father's, to stay till they could git another place. Yer uncle gin 'em ten dollars when they went. He 'd a ben glad to give fifty if he 'd a ben able. They was very thankful for 't, and the parson gin us his partin' blessin', and I'd ruther have *that* than all Cappen Smalley's money. We all felt bad enough when we said good-by. Miss Scrantum cried hard—she dident try to conceal her feelins then. Susan cried tew, and so did I—and we had a gineral time kissin' all round; as true as I live, Jeff, he kissed Susan tew—but don't you teaze him about it; I was glad to see him dew it, though Susan did blush awfully. They made us promise to come and see 'em if ever they got another sittiwation. We 've heerd lately that the parson had got a call to Bangtown. I don't know nothin' about the village, but I hope to gracious it 's a place where *donation parties* is a thing unknown.

XXIV.

Aunt Maguire Treats of the Contemplated Sewing Society at Scrabble Hill.

WE 're a gwine to have a Sewin' Society at Scrabble Hill. Miss Birsley, lawyer Birsley's wife, was the first one that proposed it. She hain't lived here but about a year, and she 's always ben used to such societies where she come from, so she felt as if she 'd like to have one here. Miss Birsley's jest the woman to take hold o' any such thing. She's a wonderful active little body, and a real good woman tew. But, above all, she 's got a way o' sayin' jest what she pleases to every body without even givin' any offense. I 've often wondered how it was that Miss Birsley could speak her mind so freely and never make no enemies by it. Why, if I should venter to talk half so plain as she does I should be univarsally hated. But she comes right out with every thing she thinks, and yet she 's more popilar than any other woman in the place. I guess it must be because folks has found out that she never says no wuss about 'em to their backs than she says to their faces

Well, she come into our house one day last week (she and I 's very good friends); she come in and axed me how I'd like to jine a Sewin' Society for benevolent purposes? I told her that not knowin' I couldent say, for I hadent never belonged to none. So she went into an explanation; and after I understood the natur of 'em I liked the idee, and said I'd go in for it. So she wanted me to go round with her and talk it up to the folks; and as I dident see no reason why I shouldent, I put on my things and off we started. The first place we went to was the minister's—we thought we 'd like to see what Miss Tuttle thought about it afore we spoke to any body else. Well, Miss Tuttle said she approved o' sowin' societies—she thought they was quite useful when they was properly conducted. She dident know how the plan would work here—at any rate, it was well enough to try, and she 'd be glad to help us all she was able to.

Next we went to Deacon Skinner's. The Widder Grimes and Charity was there spendin' the day, so we discussed the pint with 'em all. Miss Skinner and the gals seemed quite took with the idee; but Charity and her mother rather hesitated at first, but after they 'd axed forty questions, and we 'd told 'em all about it, and they 'd satisfied themselves that they could git along without givin' any thing more than their time for an hour or tew a week, and git their tea to boot, they agreed to jine. So Miss Birsley took

down their names. We dident conclude what we should dew with the avails o' our labor—thought we 'd discuss that matter at the first meetin', and Miss Birsley said she 'd have 'em meet to her house the next week a Wensday.

When we come away from there, I says, says I, "We must n't forgit to go to see Liddy Ann Buill." "O yes," says Miss Birsley, "the old maid that keeps the milliner's shop" Now I hadent the least idee she 'd jine, but I know 'd she never 'd forgive us if we dident call on her. She 's a curus critter—consates that some folks feels above her, and it makes her wonderful oncomfortable. She 's always on a look out for slights and insults, and o' course she thinks she gits plenty on 'em. She hates Deacon Fustick's wife like pizen, on account o' some remarks she heerd o' Miss Fustick's makin' about the ostridge feathers she wore on her bunnit winter afore last. Miss Fustick said afore old Miss Crocker, that she thought Liddy Ann Buill was tew old to wear plumes. Old mother Crocker went straight and told Liddy Ann on 't, and she was hoppin' mad about it. She went round talkin' about Miss Fustick at a terrible rate. Of course, Miss Fustick talked back agin, and it led to an awful quarrel that ain't made up yet. That bunnit *was* a curiosity though. Blue velvet with a couple o' great long yaller feathers tipped with pink on 't, and red flowers in the inside. "I know she won't jine,"

says I; "but we may as well call, for she 'll be awful mad if we don't." "I guess I can manage her," says Miss Birsley. "I know she thinks I feel above her, but I 'll see ef I can't convince her she mistaken." So in we goes—Liddy Ann was a sewin' a straw bunnit. She 's ginerally pretty perlite to me - I s'pose she thinks I ain't proud—but when she see me long o' Miss Birsley, she thought I d naturally feel ruther lifted up (bein' as Miss Birsley belongs to the upper crust), and so she 'd treat me accordin'ly. She looked up when we come in, and gin us a wonderful stiff bow—never laid by her sewin'—dident even ax us to sit down—but there she sot, head up, nose in the air (she 's got a sing'lar way o' turnin' up her nose at folks), with a real I 'm-as-good-as-you-be look on her face, and sewed away as if her life depended on 't. I felt ruther aukerd, but Miss Birsley dident seem to. She looked down into the show-box that sot on the counter, and says she, "What a beautiful assortment o' ribbins—you 've jest got 'em up, hain't you, Miss Buill?" "I have," says Liddy Ann. "That green and white plaid one 's a beauty," says Miss Birsley—"Won't you please to let me look at it?" "Can't you lift the kiver and take it out yerself?" says Liddy Ann, says she. "O yes, to be sure," says Miss Birsley—"I dident know as I might." So she took it out and admired it wonderfully. "What a firm stout ribbin it is tew?" says she—"Why, Miss Buill,

you make better selections than the merchants dew." "When *I* buy ribbins I buy *ribbins*, and not shavin's," says Liddy Ann. "So I see," says Miss Birsley. "I'll take three yards on 't, if you please." I wondered whether the critter 'd condescend to git up and wait on her—but she couldent help it—so she riz with a great deal o' dignity and measured it off. Miss Birsley paid for 't; and then she happened to notice a straw bunnit that laid on the shelf—'t was one that Liddy Ann had been dewin' over for Loanthy Pettibone—"How white this bunnit is!" says she—"I don't see how you can make old straw look so nice." "When I bleech hats I *bleech* 'em," says Liddy Ann; "I don't *tan* 'em." "So I perceive says Miss Birsley, says she—"but I declare I 'd a' most forgot my arrand—we 're a tryin' to raise a Sewin' Society, Miss Buill, and we called to see whether you wouldent jine?" "Me!" says Liddy Ann, lookin' a leetle grain pleasanter 'n she did afore—"well, I don't know—I'm fearful you won't succeed in yer undertakin'." "Why not?" says I. "O," says she, "society here ain't united as it ought to be—indiwiddiwals don't pull together at all." "Well, then," says Miss Birsley, "mabby a Sewin' Society would be the means o' makin' 'em more united—it promotes good feelin' to meet together and work for some benevolent objict—makes folks take an interest in one another, you know." "O, but 't wculdent be the case here," says

Liddy Ann; "there 's tew much rastocratical feelin —some o' the members would carry their heads so high, and think themselves so much better 'n some others; and them others would *know they* was jest as good as the rest—for my part, shouldent want to put myself in the way o' bein' put down and stompt on afterward by Deacon Fustick's wife and such." Miss Birsley, she raised her hands and eyes, and says she, "The land alive!—well, I declare, if I ain't beat now to hear you go on at such a rate, Miss Buill! You look well a talkin' about aristocracy when you 've got more on 't than anybody else in the village. Why, I always thought you was very proud and haughty; and I guess it 's the general impression that you feel above your neighbors. I was half afeared to come in here to-day, you 've always been so scornful toward me; but now I *am* here, I feel as if I *must* speak plainly—and I 'll tell you *what*, if you raly want society to be united, you must be the first to set the example. You *must* lay aside some o' yer pride, and consent to associate with yer neighbors on equil tirms." (Liddy Ann's nose come down a peg, and she raly looked quite gratified. Thinks me, these ere folks that 's forever a blazin' away about aristocracy, are always willin' enough to have the name o' bein' aristocrats themselves, and would be so actilly if they had a chance). Miss Birsley went on—"Now, if you 're sincere in what you say, do, for pity's sake, show it

by comin' to the Sewin' Society. We expect all the other girls 'll come—the Skinners have agreed to, and we intend to call on the rest, and no doubt they 'll jine." Liddy Ann's nose come down another peg to hear herself classed with the *girls*. She looked eny most good-natered. "Well, I'll see about it," says she—"but why don't you take some cheers and set down?" "Because you hain't invited us tew," says Miss Birsley. "Dear me," says Liddy Ann, "how forgitful I be!" "No matter," says Miss Birsley, "we can't stay to set down now—but you *will* jine us, won't you? we depend a great deal on your taste, and the other girls all seem to give up to you in that respect." Liddy Ann fairly dropt her nose to a level with other folkses, and actilly smiled, and says she—"Well, takin' 'all things into consideration, I ruther guess I *will* jine." So Miss Birsley took down her name, and told her not to fail to attend the first meetin' at her house next Wensday. She promised she 'd come; and then she went to the door with us mighty gracious, and hoped we 'd call on her agin. After we 'd got on a piece, says I, "Well I dew say for 't, I never was more beat in all my born days than I was to see you git round that cross-grained old critter as you did! I dident know afore that you ever used any *soft scap*, but I 'm sure you daubed it onto Liddy Ann right and left; 't was the best way after all though, for if you 'd a took her to task about bein

jealous and suspicious, she 'd a ben tearin' mad, and like enough showed us the door, and then went round and jawed about us afterward." "Jest so," says Miss Birsley, "the only way to deal with such folks is to try to make them satisfied with themselves; make 'em think you look upon 'em as persons o' some consequence, and they 'll dew any thing you want 'em tew; and then, tew, there 's a satisfaction in it, because it makes 'em feel so much more comfortable and good-natered."

The next place we went to was Dr. Lippincott's. Miss Lippincott was pleased with the idee of a Sewin' Society, and said she 'd jine. Anny Mariar sot there a playin' on the pianner, and we axed her if she wouldent take hold and help us? "Dear me, no!" says she; "I can't bear to sew, and, besides, I don't understand it. I never had to sew any." "How old are you?" says Miss Birsley. "Eighteen," says Anny Mariar. "The land alive!" says Miss Birsley, "eighteen year old and don't know how to sew!—and you can set there and tell on 't without blushin'! Why what 's yer ma ben thinkin' about all this time to neglect yer eddication so? I declare, I must tell Dick o' that; I shan't allow him to git interested in a young lady that don't know how to sew"—(Dick was her nephew; he was a studyin' law with Mr. Birsley, and was quite attentive to Anny Mariar.) "Well," she went on, "it 's high time you larnt, and if you 'll come

to the Sewin' Society, I 'll engage to teach you." Miss Birsley said all this in a pleasant, good-natered way, but Miss Lippincott felt it, and so did Anny Mariar. I guess she begun to suspect that, after all, 't wa'n't so wonderful lady-like not to know how to sew. She promised she 'd attend the meetin' next week. "That 's good," says Miss Birsley; "but don't for pity's sake, wear all them petticoats, for I don't think ther 'll be room for 'em if the meetin's large."

When we come from there, we started for Deacon Fustick's and while we was a crossin' the road we observed Cappen Smalley a standin' in his store door. "There 's the cappen," says Miss Birsley, "now we 'll go in and make him give us something to begin with." "Gracious sakes!" says I, "I hope you don't expect to squeeze any thing out o' him?" "To be sure I dew," says she. "Well, you 'll find yerself mistaken," says I; "for he never gives nothing to no objict—always takes it out in talkin'." "You see 'f I don't make him hand over," says she. When the cappen see us a comin' he went in so 's to be ready to wait on us. "Cappen,' says Miss Birsley, "we hain't come to trade to-day; we 've come on bizness. We ladies are thinkin' o' startin' a Sewin' Society for benevolent objicts, and it 's quite important to git the opinion o' the leadin' men o' the place afore we begin. What do *you* think o' the plan, cappen?" "A capital plan, says he, "a most excellent idee. I 've long been of

opinion that somethin' o' the kind was needed here—it 's a great satisfaction to be laborin' for the good of our feller-critters. To what partickler purpouse do you intend to devote the avails o' yer labor?" "Well," says she, "we hain't decided yet; we shall wait till we git started, and then consider the matter—ther 's enough ways o' dewin' good with money, you know." "Exactly," says the cappen, says he, "and I would suggest the idee o' your expendin' yer funds in the purchase of articles o' clothin' for the poor; ther 's a great number in destitute circumstences in this place, and it strikes me it would be a great satisfaction to the ladies to furnish 'em with comfortable apparril." "That *is* a good idee," says Miss Birsley—"don't you think so, Miss Maguire" "Yes," says I. "I'm glad it strikes you favorably," says the cappen, says he; "and come to think, I have on hand a variety o' materials that would be suitable to make garments for the poor; and if you see fit to purchase, I 'll let you have 'em at first cost, seein' it 's for a benevolent objict. In such cases it 's always a satisfaction to me to sell low." "You 're very kind," says Miss Birsley, "we 'll mention it at the meetin'; but we 've got to have *some* funds to begin with. You can give us something, I s'pose?" "Well, raly," says the cappen, says he, rubbin' his hands together, "I 'm very sorry, very, indeed, that it 's happened so. It 's very inconvenient jest now—in fact, its onpossible for me to give any thing at this

time. I have a large remittance to make very soon to New York, and, of course I can't spare a penny. We men o' bizness that have large outstandin' debts are often more put to 't for ready money than a day-laborer—it 's very vexatious, very, indeed." "Yes," says Miss Birsley, "it *must* be so—it must be very tryin' to you to be scant o' money when you have a call to contribbit, it 's such a *satisfaction* to you to give"—(here she gin me a hunch)—"but that don't make no difference to us, we 'd jest as live take something out o' the store—for instance, some o' this ere cotton cloth —(and she stept up to a pile o' shirtin' that laid on the counter)—"you 'd esteem it a privilege to give us a piece o' this" "But—but," says the cappen, "I raly don't feel." "Now, cappen," says Miss Birsley, "you needent apologize a word, this is very nice cloth and it 'll be jest as good to us as money—it 'll make first rate shirts, and we can always find ready market for good shirts." "But," says he, "consider a minnit—a piece o' shirtin' is—" "O now, don't talk so, cappen," says she; "a piece o' shirtin 's jest exactly as good as any thing else, and we 'd jest as live have it as the money; for if we had the money we should have to spend it to buy materials to begin on. We know 't would be more of a *satisfaction* to you to give us five dollars if 't was convenient; but seein' it ain't, we 're perfectly willin' to take this—so jest please to dew it up;" so she picked out one o' the best pieces

and tumbled it down toward him. The cappen he looked awful womblecropt—I declare, I raly pitied the poor man—he hesitated a minnit, and then, can you believe it? he actilly took the cloth and done it up!—but I tell ye, I never see such an oncomfortable lookin' countenance as his 'n while he was a dewin' on 't. "Now," says Miss Birsley, "I 'll trouble you to write on 't—'Thirty-one yards shirtin' presented to the Ladies' Sewin' Society by Captain Smalley.'" So he took a pen and writ it, and I 'll be hanged if he dident look as if he was a signin' his own death warrant. "Much obleeged to ye," says Miss Birsley, and she took up the cloth and we come off. When we got to the door, she turned round, and says she, "Mabby it will be a *satisfaction* to ye, cappen, to buy some o' the shirts after we git 'em made?" The cappen he gin a ghastly grin, and a peculiar kind of a bow as much as to say—"You see 'f you ketch me agin," and so we bid him good-afternoon, and left him to his meditations. "Well," says I, "I 'll give it up now!—if I hadent a seen it with my own eyes, I never'd a believed it, never! How astonished every body 'll be when they hear on 't?" "Yes," says Miss Birsley; "but we mustent let on how we got it out of him—'t ain't right to tell o' such things—we must let folks think he gin it of his own accord." "Jest so," says I; but, thinks me, its tew good to keep, and I *must* tell Mr. *Godey* on 't, though I won't mention it to any body

else. Well, it was a pretty heavy load to carry, and Miss Birsley proposed we should take it into her husband's office and leave it. The office was nigh by, so we goes in. Miss Birsley huv it down, and says she to her nephew, "There, Dick, I wan't you to bring that up when you come home to-night." Squire Birsley looked at it and read the writin', and says he, "You don't mean to say that Cappen Smalley gin you this?" "To be sure he did," says she; "don't you believe his own words?" "Pretty cunnin' in you," says the squire, "to git it in writin', for fear he 'd be down on yer society with a bill." "O law!" says she, "jest as if I done it for that." Dick Wilson he looked up kind o' knowin', and says he, "It *takes you to come it*, Aunt Lucy."

Next we went to Deacon Fustick's. Miss Fustick and Jane Elizy had gone to Deacon Peabody's to tea, so we went round there, and had a chance to see 'em all at once. Miss Peabody 's entirely governed by Miss Fustick in every thing, so she waited to see what Miss Fustick would say afore she expressed her opinion about the Sewin' Society; and Miss Fustick don't want to go into any thing without she can be head man, and as she was n't sure how she 'd stand in the Sewin' Society, she hesitated a spell. At last she said she had her doubts about it—dident like to undertake a thing till she was convinced 't would promote the interests o' religion—(Miss Fustick 's awful pious ac-

cordin' to *her* idees o' piety.) Of course, Miss Peabody had *her* doubts tew, about jinin' the society. Miss Birsley and me, we both said tew 'em that we 'd no doubt but what the Sewin' Society would be the means o' dewin' a great deal o' good if 't was properly conducted. Well, Miss Fustick said she was onsartin' about bein' able to attend—her time was pretty much took up—she was Superintendent o' the Maternal Society, President o' the Daughters o' Temperance, and Correspondin' Secretary to the Friends o' Humanity, and she was afeard she couldent consistently do much for the Sewin' Society; but she 'd try to attend occasionally—at least she 'd make it a subject o' prayer, and try to find out what was *duty* in the case. Of course, Miss Peabody said she 'd try to attend tew—and then we axed ther daughters whether they 'd come? Sophrony Peabody inquired whether the gentlemen was a gwine to attend? We said that hadent been thought of yet. And Jane Elizy Fustick said she hoped in all favor they wouldent—if they did, *she* wouldent any how—she couldent bear to have the fellers stickin' round. "Why can't you speak the truth," says Miss Birsley, "and say you won't come *without* they do?" At last they both said they 'd jine.

Next, we went into Jo Gipson's, and there we found Tom Hodges' wife a visitin' with her young one. Of all the children I ever see, that boy 's the disagreeablest· but his mother don't think so. She makes a

natral fool of him—always takes him every where with her, and it takes every body in the house to attend to him. He was a settin' on his mother's lap eatin' an awful great hunk o' cake, makin' a dretful growlin' noise over it that eny most prevented our hearin' one another talk. After we 'd discussed the Sewin' Society with the ladies, and they 'd both said they 'd jine, Miss Birsley says to the young one, "Come here and see me, bub." "Me won't!" says he. "He 'd ruther stay by his mommy, hadent he, darlin'?" says Miss Hodge. "Stay there, then, if you want to, little cross-patch," says Miss Birsley. I felt ruther sorry to hear her speak out so, so I says, "What 's yer name, ducky?" "Nun o' oo bidness!" says he. "O now," says his mother, "can't he be a little man and tell the lady his name?" "Me won't!" says he, and he hit his mother a slap in the face. "Now that ain't pritty," says she; "mommy 'll cry," so she put her hands up to her face and pretended to cry. After a spell, says she, "Now tell the lady his name nice and pritty, and then mommy 'll stop cryin'." But instid o' tellin' his name, he begun to bawl for more cake. "Wait a minnit, Miss Gipson," says Miss Hodge, "I want the ladies to hear him tell his name, he says it so sweet and cunnin'. Now tell the lady his name, and then he shall have more cake." "Yando Puffle Hogs," says the little torment. "That 's a darlin'," says his mother—"now, Miss Gipson may git him a great big

piece o' cake." "What did he say his name was?" says Miss Birsley. "Orlando Percival Hodge," says his mother. "The land alive!" says Miss Birsley, "I declare I don't blame the young one for not wantin' to tell his name." "What! don't you like it?" says Miss Hodge. "No," says Miss Birsley; "I don't admire double names any way, especially such awful jaw-breakers as that." "Why how you talk," says Miss Hodge, "for my part, I think boys names always ought to be double. I told his pa I wanted to give him a name that would sound well in Congress one o' these days, and I think 'Orlando P. Hodge' will." "The land alive!" says Miss Birsley, "I s'pose you think that Henry Clay 'd be a much greater man if his name was Henry P. Clay. And George Washington, tew, no doubt he 'd a made a great deal more noise in the world if his name had a ben George P. Washington. What a pity 't wa'n't--but you needent be calculatin' on seein' your boy a member c' Congress—his name 'll be the death of him afore he comes to maturity. Did you ever consider that 't was O. P. H?" "Gracious!" says Miss Hodge, "it never struck me afore." "Miss Birsley," says I, "it's time for us to go." "So 't is," says she. "Well, ladies, we shall expect to see you at the meetin' next Wensday, but, Miss Hodge, don't you bring O. P. H., for I shan't have time to stuff him."

Well, from there, we went over to Professor Stub-

bleses to present the case to Miss Stubbles and Jerushy. Miss Stubbles is quite a clever woman, and a good member o' society as fur as she dares to be; but she 's dretfully under the Professor's thumb, and he 's a wonderful curus man; he 's got some o' the oddest notions in his head that ever you heerd of—thinks that property ought to be equilly divided—calls all rich men oppressors, and all the laborin' class abused and deprived o' their rights—holds that men and wimmin ought to be eddicated jest alike. He 's always a whalin' away about the dignity o' labor—has jest ben deliverin' a course o' lecters on the subjict, and he calls all men that don't take hold and dew kitchen work, domestic tyrants; but he has such a blind, twistical way o' talkin', that a body can't tell what he means half the time—husband says he don't know himself what he 's a drivin' at. When we got there, Miss Stubbles was in the side yard a splittin' wood; she come round and went in with us. They hadent no fire only in the kitchen, so she took us in there. The professor was a churnin' —I thought I should go off when I see him. He 's a great, tall, lank, ongainly man, and there he stood with a check apron on, a churnin' away like fury—he *did* look like old Time. Their overgrown gawkey son, Nathan, was a settin' the tea-table. There 's somethin' wonderful quizzical about the boy's looks. His clus is a great deal tew small for him, and he looks as if he was jest a gwine

to bust out of 'em like a chicken out o' the shell. He looked wonderful sober a settin' the table; but they say he 's up to all sorts o' tricks away from home. We inquired for Jerushy, and they said she 'd gone to milk. Well, we told our bizness, and axed Miss Stubbles if she 'd jine the society? She looked at the Professor to see how he took it afore she answered us —so I says, says I, "What do *you* think o' the plan, Professor Stubbles?" The Professor giv three or four awful *hams* to clear out his throat, and then says he, "Did I believe that an organization of this description would be a labor-promotin' association, I would give it my heart-willing approval." "No doubt it will be so," says Miss Birsley. "Ladies," says he, "it is high time that the dignity of labor was appreciated world-wide." (We see he was in for a speech, so we let him go on.) "It 's high time that the purse-proud and vice-bloated aristocracy o' the land was compelled to toil like the hard-handed sons and daughters of honest poverty;—it 's high time that the artificial arrangements of society was done away, and this sin-distracted, folly-bewildered, hag-ridden world was governed by such laws as the Great Heart of the universe originally intended. Ladies, the earth-mission of mundane souls is twofold; first, to discharge with self-interest-sacrificing zeal our duty toward down-trodden humanity; second, to perform with soul-earnest, wife-assisting, daughter-helping, labor loving fidelity,

Here the churn-dasher came down with such a vengeance, that the cream spirted up and spattered all round.—Page 291.

such domestic services as shall be to be performed at home; and I pronounce that soul who refuses to ac knowledge the dignity of household labor, a pride-besotted, contempt-deserving, heaven-provoking churl.' Here the churn-dasher come down with such a ven geance, that the cream spirted up and spattered all round, and some on 't went onto Miss Birsley's shawl. "The land alive!" says she, "that was dignified, any how." Miss Stubbles jumped up to clean it off. "Set still, Miss Stubbles," says Miss Birsley, "it 's the Professor's bizness to repair the mischief. Come, Professor, git a wet cloth and wipe off my shawl afore the grease soaks in." The Professor looked mad and dident stir. "Well," says she, "accordin' to what you jest advanced, you must own yerself to be a pride-besotted wretch. Now, Professor, I should like to know if it would n't be ruther more dignified for you to go out and split wood, than 't is to make yer wife do it while you stay in the kitchen and churn? Would n't it be quite as dignified to send that great able-bodied boy to the pastur' to milk, as 't is to make Jerushy go? It kind o' seems to me as if labor wa'n't dignified only when it 's done by the right persons, and in the right time and place. It seems to me as if it 's the best way for every body to dew ther duty in the station where Providence has placed 'em—mabby it 's an *artificial arrangement*, but it strikes me as ruther a good one." The Professor looked quite

beat, and begun to *ham* and clear his throat, and I see he was a preparin' to let off another speech, so I says to Miss Birsley, "Come, it 's time we was a gwine." So we riz to come away, and Miss Birsley says she, "Well, Professor Stubbles, I s'pose you 'll be offended if I don't invite you and Nathan to come to the Sewin' Society and help us, but as my idees respectin' the dignity o' labor differ from yourn, I think I 'd a leetle ruther have Miss Stubbles and Jerushy come." The Professor looked real wrathy, but dident say nothing, and we left him a churnin' away for dear life.

Well, the next day we went to the Parkers, and the Billinses, and the Stillman's, and the Pettibone's, and all round; but 't would take tew long to go over with the hull genealogy of all the calls we made. Enough to say, we found most every body agreeable to the plan; and when they wa'n't in favor on 't, Miss Birsley argyd 'em into 't—so she sent a notice to Parson Tuttle, and yesterday he giv it out in meetin', requestin' all the ladies o' the congregation to meet next Wensday afternoon at the house of Squire Birsley, for the purpose of organizin' a Sewin' Society for benevolent objects.

XXV.

Aunt Maguire continues her Account of the Sewing Society.

I WISH to gracious you could attend one of our Sewin' Society meetin's. You never see nothin' to beat 'em, I 'll be bound for 't. We 've had tew now. At the first one, at Squire Birsley's, ther was twenty-five present. Miss Birsley had got some shirts cut out o' Cappen Smalley's cloth, and as fast as they come in she sot 'em to work—at least she gin 'em some work, but ther was so much talkin' to dew ther was precious little sewin' done. Ther tongues went a good deal faster 'n ther fingers did, and the worst on 't was, they was all a runnin' at once. Ther was an everlastin' sight o' talkin', but it did seem as if they wouldent never come to no decision in creation. 'T wa'n't expected we should dew much at the first meetin' more 'n to elect the managers, and make up our minds how often we should meet—and I begun to think we shouldent dew even that much, there was such o' sight o' discussin' and disputin' about every thing. Some was for meetin' once a week, and some

thought 't was altogether too often. Some was for stayin' to tea, and some was opposed to 't. Some thought 't would be a good plan to stay and work evenin's, and some was of opinion 't would n't pay, bein' as we 'd have to burn so many candles and lamps. Ther wa'n't nothing said about what object we 'd work for at the first meetin'—thought we 'd leave that till next time.

Well, we talked and talked and talked, and the upshot on 't was, Miss Birsley was appinted *president*—Miss Ben Stillman, Miss Dr. Lippincott and Miss Deacon Fustick, *managers*—Polly Mariar Stillman *secretary*, and Liddy Ann Buill, *treasurer*. Moreover, we agreed to meet once a fortnight, at tew o'clock in the afternoon, stay to tea and work till dark. When we 'd got through with our bisness, we had tea—quite a plain tea. Miss Birsley don't approve o' makin' much fuss for Sewin' Society—because if ye dew, ther 'll be some that 'll feel as if they couldent afford to have it to their houses. She dident give us but one kind o' cake, but 't was light and good, and so was the bread; and we had sliced meat and cheese. Miss Birsley dident say nothing about it but she hoped the rest would foller her example. I made up my mind I would any how, whether the rest did or not.

Well the ladies all eat as if they liked it, and they praised up every thing at a wonderful rate. They *never* laid tooth to such bread in all their lives; the

butter was superfine; the cold meat was *delicious*, and for the cake it *was* a mystery to them how Miss Birsley managed to *always* to have such first-rate cake. Miss Deacon Peabody declared she 'd eat such a hearty supper she was afeard she should be sick. After tea, Miss Jo Gipson invited us to meet at their house next time, and then we went hum. While we was in the bed-room a puttin' on our things, I heerd Miss Peabody whisper to Miss Stillman and say, "Did you ever see any thing that beat that tea in all your born days? No presarves at all!" "I never did," says Miss Stillman. "If I cant't give 'em a better tea when they meet to our house, I 'll give up."

Well, at the next meetin' ther was about the same number present, and we talked up what we 'd dew with the money. The difficulty was, the members couldent agree upon nothin'—some wanted to work for *this* objict, and some wanted to work for *that.* Miss Skinner and some o' the rest thought we 'd ought to sew for the missionaries, but most on 'em opposed it, 'cause they wanted to *see* what become o' the money. Miss Stubbles though 't would be a good plan to establish a school for the colored sect—I s'pose the Professor put her up to 't—but nobody else dident seem to be in favor on 't; and Sister Bedott (she attended), she said *she* never 'd agree to that, 't would be money throw'd away, for niggers would be niggers, dew what ye would to elevate 'em. Miss Fustick (she come in

and sot a spell with her things on—said she couldent stay long, jest dropped in on her way to the Matarnal Society meetin'), she thought we couldent dew better'n to give the avails of our labor to the "Sons o' Temperance." "Sons o' yer granny," says Liddy Ann Buill, says she (you know she and Miss Fustick 's a quarrelin'.) When she spoke up so, Miss Fustick looked awful mad, and got up to go: when she reached the door, she turned round and says she, "Perhaps Miss Buill would ruther work for the Old Maids' Consolation Society' that they talk o' formin'. Good afternoon, ladies!" and off she cut afore Liddy Ann had time to answer. The gals all tittered, and Liddy Ann lookt wonderful womblescropt. I don't know but she'd a cleared out if Miss Birsley hadent a smoothed it over in her cunnin' way; she laughed, and says she, "What, Miss Buill, you gals don't mean to help the old maids, I hope? I say let 'em take care o' themselves." Liddy Ann grinned and looked quite satisfied.

Well, they talked and talked and talked, jest as they did at the first meetin', to no more purpose neither only to git more ryled up than they did then. It seemed as if every one had got a partickler pint to carry and was determined the rest should yield to 't. I tried a number o' times to make a proposition I 'd thought on, but ther was so many that talked louder and faster 'n what I could, that I couldent for the life

o me git nobody to listen tew me. At last I went to Miss Birsley and told her my idee, and axed her what she thought on 't. She said she liked the notion. "Well, then, you propose it," says I, "for I can't git 'em to listen to me if I try till Doomsday." So she spoke out, and says she, "Ladies!" but ther was such a racket nobody dident hear her. So she tried agin: "Ladies, I say!" but still they dident pay no attention Then she took the tongs and knockt on the stove as loud as ever she could. "Order!" says she. They stoppt talkin' then, and lookt round to see what she wanted. "Ladies," says she, "Miss Magwire has proposed an object to work for that strikes me as an excellent one. She thinks we 'd better raise enough to repair the meetin'-house, and for my part, I think we couldent dew better: the meetin'-house is in a miserable condition; the plasterin's a comin' off in ever so many places, and the pulpit 's a forlorn old thing, away up in the air; it 's enough to break a body's neck to look at the minister, and shakes like an old egg shell. Mr. Tuttle says he 's a'most afeard to go into it. Don't you think 't would be a good plan to tear it down and build another? Now don't all speak at once. We never shall dew nothing in creation if we don't have some sort o' order. Miss Skinner, what 's *your* opinion?"

Well, Miss Skinner was delighted with the idee, and so was the Grimeses, and the Fosters, and the

Peabodys. Miss Peabody said the Baptists and the Episcopals was all a pintin' at us for lettin' our house o' worship be in such a condition. Miss John Brewster said she 'd long thought our meetin'-house was a disgrace to the village; she 'd no doubt but what 't would be an advantage to the cause o' religion to repair it, for the Widder Pettibone told her how 't if we 'd had a decent meetin'-house *she* wouldent a went off and jined the Episcopals, but she got so disgusted with the old nasty house and so tired a stretchin' her neck to see the minister, that she couldent stan' it no longer.

"The dear me!" says Charity Grimes, "I want to know if she gives *that* as a reason! Why, every body knows she went there 'cause Curnel Dykeman's an Episcopal."

"Yes," says Polly Mariar Stillman, "I guess it 's ginerally known what took *her* there."

"She 's a wonderful oneasy critter," says Miss Peabody; "she 's ben a Baptist and a Presbyterian, and now she 's an Episcopal. I wonder what she 'll be next."

"Well, it 's cause she 's a widder," says Glory Ann Billins. "I never know'd a widder yet but what was as oneasy as a fish out o' water. I raly believe it 's nat'ral tew 'em."

"Jest so," says Tiddy Ann Buill, "widders will be widders."

"Not if they can help it," says I. I was sorry as soon as I said it, Sister Bedott lookt so mad. I tell ye she gin me an awful blowin-up when we got hum —said every body in the room thought I meant her, and she dident mean to go to the meetin' no more. I don't know whether she will or not.

Well, they 'd got hold o' the Widder Pettibone, and they dident let her drop right off: if her ears dident burn that afternoon, I 'm mistaken. Some on 'em got so engaged talkin' about her they stopt sewin' intirely. Bymeby Miss Birsley got out o' patience, and knockt on the stove. "Order!" says she. When they got still, says she—"When the ladies have got the Widder Pettibone sufficiently done up, I 'd like to have 'em take hold and dew up ther shirts." "Law me," says old Aunt Betsy Crocker, "they ain't a dewin' her up; they 're a pickin' on her tew pieces." Aunt Betsy ain't no great talker, but when she does speak she always says somethin' to the pint. She 's a real clever old soul, good to every body, dumb critters and all. She was disappinted when she was young, so she hain't never got married; lives all alone; nobody in the house but her and Gruff, her old dog. She thinks the world o' Gruff. I went in to see her one evenin' last winter. Gruff was asleep on a rug behind the stove, and ther was 'a great pan o' vittals settin' by him. I thought 't was somethin' she 'd sot there to warm, so I says, says I, "Ain't you afeared Gruff 'll

be pokin' his nose into yer meat?" "Law me," says she, "that 's there a purpose for him. I always set somethin' by him when he goes to bed, so he 'll find it handy if he happens to wake up hungry in the night." "My sakes," says I, "I wouldent take all that pains for a dog." "Law me!" says she, "Gruff don't know he 's a dog—he thinks he 's *folks*."

"Well, ladies," says Miss Birsley, "if it 's a possible thing, I 'd like to have it decided whether we shall repair the meetin'-house or not. I think we 'd better put it to vote. Them that 's in favor on 't will please to signify it by holdin' up their right hand." Well, all o' the members held up their right hand exceptin' Miss Ben Stillman and Polly Mariar. "Miss Stillman," says Miss Birsley, "I see that you and Polly Mariar don't hold up yer hands. Don't you approve of appropriatin' the money for that purpose?"

"Well, I can't say as I disapprove on 't," says Miss Stillman, "but I should think we 'd better not be in a hurry about makin' up our minds what we 'll dew with the money."

"What 's the use o' waitin'?" says Miss Birsley. "For my part, I think we should go ahead with more sperrit if we had an object fixed on to work for." "I think so tew," says Miss Stillman; "but, you know, we 'd ought to be unanimous." "Then why don't you agree with us?" says Miss Birsley; "that 's the way to be unanimous."

"I mean," says Miss Stillman, says she, "that we 'd ought to wait till ther 's a full meetin' afore we vote."

"The land alive!" says Miss Birsley, "I don't know what you call a full meetin' if this ain't one."

"The fact is," says Polly Mariar, stretchin' her great mouth from ear to ear and displayin' all her big teeth—(Jeff says her mouth looks like an open sepulcher full o' dead men's bone)—"the fact is," says she, "mar and me 's of opinion that we hadent ought to vote till Miss Samson Savage is consulted."

"Miss Samson Savage ain't a member o' the Society," says Miss Birsley, "and she don't go to meetin' once in six months. I don't know what we should want to consult her for, I 'm sure."

"But you know," says Miss Stillman, "her means is such that she 's able to contribbit a great deal to any object she approves of."

"And we 'd ought to be careful about offendin' her," says Polly Mariar, "for, you know, she withdraw'd herself from the Baptists because their Sewin' Society dident dew as she wanted to have 'em."

"Did the Baptists break down after it?" says Miss Birsley. Jest then the door opened, and in marched Miss Samson Savage. But afore I go on, I 'd ought to tell you something about her. She 's one o' the *big bugs* here—that is, she 's got more money than

a' most any body else in town. She was a tailoress when she was a gal, and they say she used to make a dretful sight o' mischief among the folks where she sewed. But that was when she lived in Varmount. When Mr. Savage married her, he was one o' these ere specilators. Wonderful fellers to make money, them Varmounters. Husband says they come over the Green Mountains with a spellin'-book in one hand and a halter in t' other, and if they can't git a school to teach, they can steal a hoss. When they first come to our place, he was a follerin' the tin-peddlin' bisness; he used to go rumblin' round in his cart from house to house, and the rich folks ruther turned up their noses at him, or he consated they did, and it made him awful wrathy; so he detarmined he 'd be richer 'n any on 'em, and pay 'em off in their own coin. Old Smith says he 's heerd him time and agin make his boast that he 'd ride over all their heads some day—dident seem to have no higher eend in view than to be the richest man in Scrabble Hill. He sot his heart and soul and body on 't, and knowin' how to turn every cent to the best advantage, and bein' wonderful sharp at a bargain, he succeeded; every thing he took hold of prospered, and without actilly bein' what you could call dishonest, afore many years every body allowed he was the richest man in the place. So he built a great big stun house and furnished it wonderful grand; his wife wouldent have a bit o' furnitewer

made here—nothin' would dew but she must send away to Philadelphy for 't. And such furnitewer was never seen in the town afore! Such elegant sofys and cheers and curtins, and ever so many curus consarns that I don't know the name of, and I guess she don't neither. So she sot up for a lady. She was always a coarse, boisterous, high-tempered critter, and when her husband grow'd rich, she grow'd pompous and overbearin'. She made up her mind she 'd rule the roast, no matter what it cost—she 'd be the *first* in Scrabble Hill. She know'd she wa'n't a lady by natur nor by eddication, but she thought mabby other folks would be fools enough to think she was if she made a great parade. So she begun by dressin' more, and givin' bigger parties than any body else. Of course, them that thinks money 's the main thing (and ther 's plenty such here and every where), is ready to flatter her and make a fuss over her, and approve of all her dewin's. If ther 's any body that *won't* knuckle tew her, I tell ye they have to take it *about east.* She abuses 'em to their faces and slanders 'em to their backs. Such conduct wouldent be put up with in a poor woman; but them that would be for drummin *me* out o' town if I should act so, is ready to uphold Miss Samson Savage, and call it *independence* and *frankness* in her. She 's got so she prides herself on it. She says *she* ain't afeard to tell folks what she think of 'em—if *she* don't like any body, they *know*

it purty soon. Husband says she wouldent think it no harm to set her neighbor's house a fire if she done it in the *day-time.* She shows her independence in another way sometimes, by riggin' out in old duds that would disgrace a washerwoman, and trainin' round town, makin' calls and so forth, sometimes in an old wagin and sometimes afoot. It tickles her wonderfully to hear folks whisper as she goes along—"Jest see Miss Savage! that 'll dew for *her*, but 't wouldent do for every body."

When she goes out in company, she 'nopolizes the hull o' the conversation. She 's detarmined that every body in the room shall have the benefit of all *she* has to say. So she talks up so awful loud that she drownds every body else's voice, and they have to listen tew her whether or no. I was to a party a spell ago where she was, and from the minnit she come in —(thank fortin' she never comes arly—always keeps the tea a waitin' for her)—I say, from the minnit she come till it broke up, she talked without ceesation. It did seem to me as if I should go distracted. In the course o' the evenin', somebody axed Pardon Pettibone's wife (she 't was Katy Carey) to play on the pianner and sing: she 's a beautiful player, and I 'm very fond o' hearin' her. When she sot down to the music, thinks me, Miss Savage *will* hold her tongue now, I 'm sure. But I was mistaken. *She* wa'n't a gwine to be put down by a pianner, not she, so she

jest pitched her voice a peg higher and went on with her stuff—all about her hired help—what Bets, the cook, done; how Suke, the chambermaid, managed, and how Nab, the washerwoman, carried sail. I couldent take no sense o' the music at all. Miss Stillman and Polly Mariar, and a few more, draw'd up round her and swallered all she said, but some o' the young folks that wanted to hear the music, lookt as if they wished Miss Samson Savage was furder.

But it 's plain to be seen with all her pretensions she feels oneasy and oncomfortable the hull time. I 've noticed that yer *codfish gentility* always dew. She knows she ain't the *ginniwine article*, and so she tries to make up for 't in brass and bluster. If any thing goes on without her bein' head man, she always tries to put it down. She was gone a journey when the Sewin' Society was started, and I s'pose she was awful mad to think we darst to git up such a thing without consultin' her. Miss Birsley called on her when she got hum, and axed her to jine. But she said she wouldent—she despised Sewin' Societies, dident want nothin' to dew with 'em. Miss Birsley dident tell nobody what she said but me; she know'd 't would make some o' the wimmin mad and scare the rest—but we both know'd 't wouldent be long afore she 'd be pokin' her nose in among us.

Well, as I said afore, she came a marchin into the room where we all sot She 's a great, tall, raw-boned

woman, and she steps off like a trainer. She had on a dirty-pink sun-bunnit, and an old ragged blue calicer open-gownd (what Jeff calls a *shelaly*) over her dress. She dident so much as say "How-de-dew" to nobody, but strammed right across the room and sot down; then she huv her old sun-bunnit onto the floor, and draw'd a long breath, and says she—"Well, I vow I 'm tired—ben round a shoppin', and shoppin' 's no small bisness with me. I don't go into a shop and stan' an hour, and make the clerks haul down all ther goods, and then buy *tew-cents' worth*, as some folks dew"—here she lookt round at Miss Grimes and Charity—"when *I* trade, I trade to some amount, and no mistake. I was ruther tired afore I left hum—had company to dinner—dident think o' comin' here when I come out—" Caroline Gipson thought she was a gwine to apologize for her dress, so she says says she, "Oh, no apologies necessary—'t was jest as well to come in as you was." "What!" says she, "I hope ye don't think I'd a dressed up if I *had* a know'd I was a comin' here?—not I. I don't believe in riggin' up to come to a sewin' meetin', as some folks dew"—(here she squinted at the Skinners—they had on new plaid dresses)—"but 't ain't every body that can *afford* to wear an old double gownd. I says to Poll, my waitin'-maid, 'Poll,' says I, 'go to the lumber-room and git my sun-bunnit and my blue calicer double gownd; I 'm a gwine out.' 'Massy sakes!'

says Poll says she, 'does Miss Savage know 't the blue double gownd has got one sleeve a' most ripped out, and the linnin 's all tore so 't it hangs down below the outside round the bottom?' 'Poll,' says I, 'if 't wa'n't that you 've jest come out o' Pennsylvany woods, and don't know nothin' about manners yet, I 'd discharge ye on the spot for darin' to question *me*, or make any remarks about what I order. I 'll forgive ye this time on account o' yer ignorance, but if ever you dew it agin you 'll git your walkin'-ticket on short order, as sure as my name 's Miss Samson Savage. Now start yer stumps, and fetch them things quick meeter.' So she fetcht 'em, and I went and done my shoppin'. On my way hum, it struck me that you was to meet here to-day, so thinks me, I 'll jest step in and see what they 're up tew." "Will you take some sewin'?" says Miss Birsley. "Not I," says she, "till I know what I 'm a sewin' for. What do ye calculate to dew with the money ye raise?"

"We thought," says Miss Birsley, "that is, the majority of us thought 't would be a good idee to arn enough to repair the meetin'-house and build a new pulpit." "Murder!" says Miss Savage; "well, I vow if that wouldent be a *worthy* object." "So you don't approve on 't, hey?" says Miss Birsley. "Approve on 't?" says she; "not I."

"No more don't me and Polly Mariar," says Miss Stillman. Miss Savage went on: "I 'd look purty

wouldent I, a workin' to fix up that meetin'-house for Tuttle to preach in!" "So you don't like Mr. Tuttle, hey?" says Miss Birsley. "Like him?" says she; "not I. He don't know nothin'—can't preach no more 'n *that stove-pipe*"—(she hates Parson Tuttle 'cause he hain't never paid no more attention to her than he has to the rest o' the congregation)—"he 's as green as grass and as flat as a pancake." "That 's jest what mar and me thinks," says Polly Mariar Stillman. Miss Savage went on: "He don't know B from a broomstick, nor bran when the bag 's open." "That 's jest what I think," says Miss Stillman. "I says to Mr. Stillman last Sabbath, as we was a comin' from meetin', 'Mr. Stillman' says I"—But what 't was she said to Mr. Stillman, dear knows, for Miss Savage dident let her go on. "I say," says she, "I 'd look beautiful a comin' to Sewin' Society and workin' the eends o' my fingers off to build a pulpit for Tuttle to be poked up in Sabbath after Sabbath, and preach off jest what he 's a mind tew. No—ye don't ketch me a takin' a stich for such an object. I despise Tuttle, and I 'll tell him so tew his face when I git a chance. Ye don't ketch me a slanderin' folks behind ther backs and then soft-soapin' 'em to their faces, as some folks dew"—(here she lookt at Miss Stillman and Polly Mariar.) "And where 's his wife, I 'd like to know? Why ain't *she* here to work to-day? A purty piece o' bisness, I must say, for you all to be

here a diggin' away to fix up Tuttle's meetin' house, when *she's* to hum a playin' *lady*." "Miss Tuttle ain't very well," says I. "That's a likely story,' says Miss Savage; and from that she went on and blazed away about Miss Tuttle at a terrible rate. Miss Stillman and Polly Mariar, and a number more o' the wimmin, sot tew and helped her whenever they could git a word in edgeways; and such a haulin' over as Miss Tuttle and the parson got, I never heerd afore in all the days o' my life.

While they was in the midst on't, Miss Gipson come to the door and axed us to walk out to tea—she'd ben out all the afternoon a gittin' it reddy—so we put up our work and went out. We don't have the tea handed round at our meetin's as a gineral thing; we have the things sot on a long table; the woman o' the house pours tea at one eend, and we all stan' round and help ourselves. It's very convenient, especially where they don't keep no help. Well, we all took hold, and for a while Parson Tuttle and his wife and every body else had a restin' spell, for even Miss Samson Savage had other use for her tongue. She believes in dewin' one thing to once. When *she* eats she *eats*—and when she talks she talks.

And we had a real nice tea, I tell ye—biscuit and butter, and crackers and cheese, and cold meat and pickles, and custard and whipt cream, and three kinds o' presarves, and four kinds o' cake, and what not!

I couldent help o' thinkin' that the money laid out on that tea would a went a good way toward the new pulpit.

"What delightful biscuit," says Miss Grimes "They are *so*," says Miss Skinner; "but Miss Gipson never has poor biscuit." "O shaw!" says Miss Gipson, "you ain't in arnest: my biscuits is miserable —not nigh so good as common. I don't think the flour 's first rate." "Miss Gipson, how *dew* you make crackers?" says Miss Stillman; "I never tasted none so good." "Now you don't *mean* so," says Miss Gipson. "I *can* make good crackers, but them 's very poor; the oven wa'n't jest right when I put 'em in." "I *must* have another piece o' this cheese, it 's *so* good," says Miss Lippincott. "Where *did* you git it?" "Well, I got it of old Daddy Sharp: he ginerally makes excellent cheese, but I tell Mr. Gipson old Sharp's failed for once—that 's what I call *poor* cheese." "Dew taste o' this plum sass, Miss Peabody," says Miss Brewster; "I never see the beat on 't." "I 'd ruther have these peaches," says Miss Peabody; "they 're *derlicious*. It is a mystery to me how Miss Gipson always has such luck with her presarves. I never dew, and I always take pound for pound tew." "This apple-jel 's the clearest I ever see," says old Miss Parker. "How *did* you make it, Miss Gipson? Dident you dew it in the sun? I 'm sure it don't look as if it ever was nigh the fire." "Now don't speak o'

that jel," says Miss Gipson. "I told Carline I was ashamed o' my jel after seein' Miss Parker's, and I was a'most sorry I 'd made any presarves since I 'd eat some o' Miss Peabody's and Miss Skinner's, theirn was *so* much nicer." So they went on. The whipt cream and custard had to be gone over: Miss Gipson had to tell jest how 't was made—what flavorin' she used, and all that—though she declared she was ashamed on 't. The *cake* was praised up: they must know how much butter ther was in *this*, how many eggs it took for *that* and so forth. Miss Gipson, of course, run it down—she *could* make good cake, but somehow she failed that time. A person that dident know how wimmin always go on at such a place, would a thought that Miss Gipson had tried to have every thing the miserablest she possibly could, and that the rest on 'em had never had any thing to hum but what was miserabler yet.

Well, every thing arthly comes to an eend, and so did that tea after a spell, and purty soon after we went hum. Miss Stillman invited us to meet to their house next time. She urged Miss Sampson Savage to come, and I don't doubt but what she will if she thinks ther 's any chance for kickin' up a muss. I was in to Miss Birsley's the next day, and she and I talked it over. She says we hain't accomplished much yit, for some o' the work 's done so miserable 't won't never sell in creation without it 's picked out and

done over better. The rest is put together wrong, and has got to be took to pieces whether or no. For my part, I feel eny most discouraged about the Sewin' Society.

XXVI.

Aunt Maguire's Visit to Slabtown.

I 'VE ben a journey sence I saw you, Nancy, away down to Slabtown, to see a cousin o' husband's that lives there. She 't was Eunice Ludlow, she marned a Bentley, carpenter and jiner by trade. They moved from Coon's Holler to Slabtown about five year ago, and there he follered the lumberin' business, and done very well at it. I hadent seen 'em since they went away, and bein' as she urged me very hard and made me promise I 'd come out there the last time she was to our house, I thought I 'd ought to go. I used to set a great deal by Eunice when she was a gal. I thought there never was a happier couple than she and Bentley was when they lived at the Holler. He had a good trade and was industrious, and so was she, and they got along first rate. And then they had a couple o' the nicest behaved children that I ever see. Lucy, the eldest, was about eight year old when they moved away, and Henry was five or six.

But I found things considerably altered since they come to Slabtown. It 's quite a big place, as big agin

as Scrabble Hill and growin' bigger all the time. Eunice had got her idees raised a good deal, and had some wonderful curus notions about *gintility*. The house was furnished mighty grand, and she dident dew her own work as she used to at the Holler, but kept a great slatterin', imperdent hired gal, that done jest as she was a mind tew about every thing.

Lucy, tew, she was a growin' up ginteel. She 's got to be the proudest little thing that ever I see, peart and bold, and right up in every body's face and eyes, stickin' in her gab all the time, and nippin' round with a couple of awful long pigtails with bows on the eends, a danglin' down her back.

Henry, he 's about as hateful a young one as ever went unflogged. I used to dread his comin' hum from school; for he went yellin' and hollerin' round the house, kickin' and spittin', and sassin' every body that spoke to him. I actilly heerd him swear a number o' times. And he 's out in the streets late o' nights, playin' and fightin' with all sorts o' boys. I talked to his father about it, told him I thought he 'd ought to keep Henry in o' nights, and be more particklar about his 'sociates. But he haw-haw'd right out in my face; "Shaw, Aunt Magwire," says he, "that 's all *cant*. I believe in lettin' boys *run;* it 's the only way to make 'em independent." "Sam Bentley," says I, "you ain't the man you used to be. When you lived to the Holler, you was quite partic'lar about yer chil-

dren, and about yerself tew; for I remember you used to go to meetin' quite stiddy with Eunice, and always had prayers in yer family night and mornin'." Don't never mention that agin," says he; "I'm ashamed on't I was *green* in them days; now I've got more inlarged views. The fact is, Aunt Magwire, Slabtown is a *great* place. If I'd a stayed at Coon's Holler, ten to one, I'd a went on in that snivellin', cantin', go-to-meetin' way all my life." "Like enough," says I; "and mabby got to heaven in it last. Slabtown *is* a *great place*, and no mistake." Sam dident say no more.

Eunice dident seem to be very proud o' me, I'm such a plain, homemade body. She never introduced me to none of her ginteel acquaintances when they called; so, as I dident have nothing to say, I used to have the benefit of all the conversation, and sartinly 't was quite entertain'. They ginerally begun with the fashions. Next, they took up the subject o' hired gals, and when they 'd wore that out, the neighborhood in gineral had to undergo a haulin' over. 'T was pretty much the same as it is in Scrabble Hill, only I think the Slabtown folks make ruther more fuss over each other to their faces, than what they dew in our place.

One afternoon, there was a youngish married woman by the name o' Miss Teeters called. She and Eunice are quite intimit; though, after all, Eunice

don't seem to think much of her, but she considers her wonderful ginteel. Her gintility seemed to consist in her wearin' more colors than I ever see on to once afore in all my born days. She had on a yaller bunnit, with a great pink artificial on it; a red shawl, and a green silk frock, and blue ribbin round her neck, and I forget what all; but t' was enough to make a body's eyes ache to look at her.

After they 'd gone over with the fashions, says Miss Teeters, says she: "I see you keep Marthy yet; how do you git along with her?"

But afore Eunice had time to answer her, the door was banged open, and the very Miss Hawkins they 'd ben talkin' about come bowsin into the the room without ever ringin' the bell. She was clear out o' breath; for she 's quite a fleshy woman. Her face was as red as a blaze, and her green satin sack was all one-sided. She looked as if she 'd fixed in a wonderful hurry and run all the way. "What 's to pay?" says Miss Teeters and Eunice in a breath. She couldent speak for a minnit or so, she was so exhausted. I got up and giv her the rockin'-cheer I was a sittin' in, and she squoze herself into it, and says she—

"*Have* you heerd the news?"

"What news?" says Miss Teeters and Miss Bentley, openin' their mouths and eyes and stretchin' their necks. "What news?—dew tell, for pity's sake!"

"O dear me, suz," says she, "I never was so dum-

foundered in all my life. Cousin Jeemes was in to our house not half an hour ago, and read it to Sary Ann and me I thought I 'd run in and see if Miss Teeters had heerd on 't. They said she was over to Mr. Bentley's, so I come right on here."

"Well, what is it, in the name o' wonder?" says Miss Teeters, says she.

"O dear me," says Miss Hawkins, a blowin' herself with her handkercher as hard as ever she could. "O dear me, ther 's the awfulest piece that you ever see, come out in the 'Ladies Book,' and it 's all about our Sewin' Society, takin' us off to an ioty, and tellin' all how we go on; and, of course, 't was writ in this village."

"You don't?" says Miss Teeters, says she.

"It 's a fact," says Miss Hawkins. "And what 's worse yet, our minister's wife writ it."

"How you talk!" says Miss Teeters.

"Well, I shouldent wonder," says Eunice, says she, "for I 've heerd that your minister's wife writes for the papers. But, pray, what does it say?"

"Oh," says Miss Hawkins, "as true as I 'm a live woman, it 's got every one of our members in, and shows us all up shamefully, only jest me and Sary Ann. I can't see as ther 's any body in it that resembles us a mite. But you 're drawed out, Miss Teeters; and Capper Sapley, he 's down large as life; and the Bomans are in for 't; and so 's Bill Sweezer's

wife, and Samanthy Cooper, and Tom Baily 's wife, and Miss Ben Curtis; and there 's a Miss Stillman and her daughter, that 's meant for the Longs. They 're all fctitious names, to be sure, but it 's easy enough to tell who 's who. But the squire's wife ketches it the worst of all. I tell ye, it takes her off to fits. Nobody can mistake it. Jeemes wouldent let us keep it, or I 'd a fetcht it over. He war gwine to take it in to the Bomanses. I hope you 'll get hold on 't; for of all the abominable messes that ever I see, it 's the crownin' pint."

"Well, I never heerd the beat on 't," says Miss Teeters.

"Nor I neither," says Eunice. "I should think a minister's wife might be in better business. Well. I'm glad I don't belong to your Society. I ain't took off, that 's sartin. But how do you know it actilly means your Society?"

"Oh, that 's plain enough," says Miss Hawkins, "for it tells things that was positively said and done at some o' the meetin's. Jest how the squire's wife went on; calls her 'Miss Samson Savage.'" (I begun to prick up my ears. Thinksme, what on airth does all this mean?)—"But the mystery to me is, how the minister's wife got hold on 't. She wa'n't there. Somebody that *was* there must a told her. I wonder who 't was?"

Miss Teeters turned ruther red. I thought she

looked kind o guilty; and says she: "It 's abominable —it 's ridicilous! I 'll go right home and tell my husband how the minister's wife 's ben writin' about me; and I shouldent wonder if he should take the matter up—he 's cowhided a number of individdiwals for speakin' disparagin' o' me. But has the squire's wife heerd on 't?"

"No," says Miss Hawkins. "I stopt there as I come along, but she 'd gone out o' town. Won't she be mad, though; she 's such a fiery critter!"

"I say," says Miss Teeters, says she, "it 's high time we got rid o' the minister; he ain't the man for us. A ginteel and intellectible congregation like our'n had ought to have a man o' great eloquential powers. And as for his wife, I never could bear her, with her old stripid dress that she wears every Sunday, rain or shine. I don't believe she was ever accustomed to ginteel society."

"Nor I neither," says Miss Hawkins. "I took a dislike tew her when they first come here. I don't like yer mum characters that never say nothin' about nobody. It seems she 's ben savin' on 't up to let off in the newspapers. Bethiar Nobles says she told her she thought our congregation drest tew much; and I shouldent wonder if she did, for she ' stuck to that old straw bunnit and everlastin' stripid dress all winter, and I s'pose it 's to set an example o' plainness afore us, jest as if we 'd foller *her* lead. For my part, I think

she might better spend more time a dressin', and less a writin' for the newspapers. And they say he incourages her in it, and likes to have her write. I wish they was both furder off."

"I wish so tew," says Miss Seeters; "and I guess ther 's a good many that wish so. She ain't popilar at all in our set. She never runs in sociably, as Miss Van Duzen used to. They say she goes a great deal more among the poor folks, than she does among the ginteel part o' the congregation. And that 's a sure sign, *I think*, that she 's ben more accustomed to minglin' with them sort o' folks, than with such as we be."

Well, they blazed away in that style for as much as an hour. I can't remember half they said; and Eunice she told 'em that if she was they, she wouldent put up with it; she 'd make a fuss about it, and have the minister sent off.

As soon as they 'd gone, Eunice burst out a laughin', and says she: "Well, if that ain't the best piece o' news I 've heerd this many a day. I 've always heerd that that Sewin' Society was a reg'lar slander-mill, where the principal busines is to brew mischief against the minister; and I 'm glad they 've got showed up at last. The minister 's a good man, and a smart man tew; but the biggest part o' the congregation is such a set of ignoramuses, that they don't know a smart man from a fool. They always make a great fuss over their minister when he first comes; but if he don't

preach smooth things tew 'em all the time, they soon contrive to starve him out or quarrel him off. When they gin this one a call, they agreed to give him five hundred dollars a year, and pay it quarterly. And it is a solemn fact, that half on't hain't ben paid yet. Betsey Hall, a girl that used to wash for 'em sometimes, told me so. She said she'd often listened to the door, and heerd the minister and his wife a talkin' over their troubles; and she says that ther ain't more 'n half a dozen in the congregation that pay their dues reglarly; and if 't wa'n't for what the minister's wife gits for writin' for the newspapers, they wouldent be able to pay their house-rent and keep out o' debt, no way. She said she overheerd him say to his wife one day: 'The quarter's rent 'll be due next Saturday, and I hain't a cent to pay it.' 'Keep up your courage my dear,' says she, 'perhaps I shall have somethin' from Philadelphy before then.' And Betsey said she guessed it come, for she was knowin' to the rent bein' paid the next Saturday. I couldent help laughin' in my sleeve when Miss Teeters was a tellin' how much better Parson Van Duzen's wife was liked than this one. They abused her like a pickpocket when she was here and was always a runnin' her down. She couldent dew nothin' to please 'em."

"Euniee," said I, why dident you talk so when they was in, and tell 'em plainly to their faces what you thought."

"O law," says she, "I dident want to get mixed up in their quarrels." And then she throw'd on her things and run off to some o' the neighbors to tell the news and talk over it. She was gone till tea time. But she dident have the satisfaction o' tellin' the story first, for every body where she went had heerd it already. News flies like wildfire in Slabtown. She dident git hold o' the piece though; nobody hadent seen it, but they 'd all heerd about it. It 's wonderful how soon 't was in every body's mouth. When Sam comes hum he was full on 't—said 't was all over town—nothin' else was talked about from one eend o' the village to t'other. Eunice was very anxious to read it; and Sam went to the bookstore to git it, but they'd sold every copy they had, and ther was a great call for more. Ther was a wonderful excitement about it. Sam said the Californy fever was nothing tew it. Californy and every thing else seemed to be entirely forgot for a spell. The wimmin laid aside all other business, and gadded round from house to house talkin about the Sewin' Society. And the men, tew, they 're as fond o' tatlin' and gossipin' in Slabtown as the wimmin. They met together in shops and stores, and bar-rooms and oyster-cellars, and talked it over. Wherever you 'd see a mess o' men standin' you might know they was discussin' the Sewin' Society.

In Slabtown, every body knows jest what every body else says and does. It seemed raly wonderful to

me how all that was said was trumpeted round. Private conversations was blazed all over town, that must a ben carried by the birds o' the air, or else ther must a ben a good many ears occurpied at a good many key-holes. I was wonderfully struck with this faculty in the Slabtown folks. They 're a community remarkable for their *inquirin' minds*. If 't was applied to any useful purpose, ther 's no calculatin' how much they might accomplish. If the government should ever conclude to make researches into the manners and customs o' the antipodes under ground, I should advise 'em to send to Slabtown for an explorin' company. I 'll warrant they 'd find out all how and about it for 'em. They 'd report all that 's a dewin' there, and a good deal more. So 't was about that article that was laid to the ministers wife's door. Every body know'd what every body else said and thought about it. The *inquirin' minds* was all at work. Every hour in the day ther was somebody a runnin' into Bentley's with some new story—something the Hawkinses or the Longs, or the Teeeters, or the squire's folks had said or done.

"And 'Miss Samson Savage,'" says Miss Teeters—"did you ever see such a perfect picter as that is o' the squire's wife?—how exactly it goes on like her, don't it? Any body that ever see her would know it in a minute."

"But," says Teeters, "I don't see how the minister's

wife found out how she talked. Some o' your members must a peached."

Miss Teeters blushed, and says she: "Oh, dear me, I 'm dreadfully afeard she 'll think 't was me. If she should, she 'd hate me like pisen, and never invite me to any more o' her parties. I wouldent git her ill-will for all the world. What *shall* I dew? I must run right over there 'fore any body else see her, and make it all straight."

"That 's right," said Teeters. "I wouldent be struck out o' her good books for no money. We 'll show her that *we* don't uphold the minister's wife in such conduct. But I must dew something tew. If she was only a man I could give her a cowhidin' or at least threaten to; but bein' she 's a woman I don't know what to dew."

"I 'll tell ye, Teeters, what ye can dew," said his wife. "You can circulate a petition to get the minister dismissed."

"That 's the checker," said Teeters, with a terrible oath.

So Miss Teeters flung on her things and started off for the squire's. And Teeters sot down to draw up his petition. When she got to the squire's, Miss Teeters huv herself down on the sofy and fainted away; and the squire's wife run for the cologne bottle. When she began to come tew, says the squire's wife, says she—

"For the land's sake, child, what's the matter with ye?"

Miss Teeters groaned, and says she: "*Have* you seen the Lady's Book?"

"What lady's book?" says the squire's wife, says she.

"Why the Lady's Book that's printed in Philadelphy once a month."

"No, I hain't seen it," says she. "What on't?"

"Well, I'm *so* glad you hain't," says Miss Teeters; "and I *do* hope you won't. Don't you look at it if you do see it. I beg of you not to look at it for all the world. Promise me you won't open it if you do see it."

"Well, I should like to know," says the squire's wife, "what's the reason I mustn't look at that partic'lar book. For gracious sake, out with it!"

"Oh," says Miss Teeters, "ther's the awfullest piece in it that ever you sot eyes on; and every body says the minister's wife writ it. It's all about our Sewin Society—takes us off most shamefully—but you especially—shows you up abominably—calls you 'Miss Samson Savage.' It ain't a bit like you, to be sure; but it's perfectly horrid. Do promise me not to read it; for it'll hurt your feelins dreadfully. It did mine. To think that a person I set so much by as I do by you, should be so abused! Mr. Teeters is perfectly outrageous about it; he says it is n't to be borne

He 's intendin' to start a petition to have the minister sent off. You know we 've long been tryin' to git rid of him, and this 'll be a good opportunity"—(Miss Teeters had always pretended to the minister that she was one of his best friends and was always a runnin' tew him with every thing the squire's wife and Miss Hawkins said against him. Of course, he nor his wife hadent no confidence in her. They understood human nater well enough to know she 'd talk against *them* behind their backs.)

'T was nat'ral enough, after all this parade, that the squire's wife should be in a terrible pucker to see the Lady's Book. So, after makin' a wonderful to do about it, and pretendin' she was awful unwillin', Miss Teeters fetcht her the book. At first, the squire's wife declared that Miss Savage wa'n't meant for her, but all her *particular friends* insisted upon it that 't was. So at last she had to give up, and, of course, she was awful mad about it, and stormed away at a terrible rate.

Miss Hawkins, she kept the ball a rollin'; devoted her hull time to runnin' round the neighborhood and blazin' away about it. She was what folks call "toady" to the squire's wife, and every body said that the "Miss Stillman in the piece, that was makin' such a muss, meant her, and she tho't so tew. But she tho't that if she could make folks believe 't was intended for Miss Long, she could accomplish tew ends: she 'd

get rid o' havin' the names o Miss Stillman and Polly Mariar' tucked onto her and her daughter, and, what was purty important, turn the Longs against the minister and his wife. Now the Longs was very stiddy, go-to-meetin' sort o' folks, and had always been very friendly to the minister's family. So Miss Hawkins went puffin' and blowin, round town, makin' a terrible fuss about the "piece," and dwellin' partic'larly on the awful shame it was to take off the Longs so. One day she went into the squire's, and the squire's wife says to her, says she: "Well, how do you feel about bein' hit off by Aunt Magwire? You ketch it about as bad as I dew."

"O shaw," says Miss Hawkins, "I ain't hit off at all. What makes you think I be?"

"Now, Hawky,"says the squire's wife, "it 's all nonsense for you to try to make *me* think that ain't meant for you and Sary Ann." "I *know* 't is."

"Well," says Miss Hawkins, says she, "between you and me, the fact is, whether 't was meant for me or not, one thing 's clear, if we could make the Longs believe 't was intended for them, we should be pretty sure o' gittin' rid o' the minister. For, of course, Miss Long and Helen would feel dretfully hurt about bein' took off so by the minister's wife, and Mr. Long he 'd think jest as they did. And if we can once git the Longs set against the minister's folks, they 'll have to quit in short order."

"Well, that is an idee," says the squire's wife. "Hawky, you 's more cunnin' than I be. If 'Daddy-long-legs' "—(that 's what she calls Mr. Long behind his back)—"once gits his dander up it 'll be all day with the parson; for some how or other, he 's contrived to git considerable influence in the parish. It must be because he 's such a stiddy old poke, for he hain't no more mind of his own than that pair o' tongs. I can turn him round with my little finger. I guess I 'll go down and give 'em a stirrin' up." So up she started and off she traipsed to Mr. Long's. She marched into the parlor, where Miss Long and Helen was a sittin', and makin' a low curchy, she says, says she: "Miss Samson Savage, at your sarvice; and how does Miss Stillman and Polly Mariar dew to day?"

Well, to make a *long* story short, the Longs was made to believe that the minister's wife had actilly ben showin' 'em up. Of course they was outrageous about it; and Miss Long talked harder aginst the minister's wife than she 'd ever talked aginst any body afore. She dident go *tew* her, like a Christian ought to, and ax an explanation, but she contented herself with callin' her an *abominable woman* and a *shameful critter*, and said she wa'n't fit to be a minister's wife, and so forth. And Mr. Long he jined in with the opposition, and wanted the minister to quit.

And Teeters, he got up his petition, and went blusterin' round with it, threatenin' to cowhide every body

.hat didont sign it. He hadent got but a few names to it, when he went into Sharp's store and axed Sharp to sign it. Sharp's a straight-forrard feller, that minds his own business. He took the petition and lookt at it, and then deliberately opened the stove door and throw'd it in; and turnin' to Teeters, says he: "Teeters, you 're a fool; go hum and take care o' yer wife, and let alone meddlin' with what 's none o' yer business."

I s'pose you think Teeters cowhided him on the spot: but you 're mistaken. He went hum and took it out in rippin' and swearin', and threatenin' to take the law o' Sharp.

XXVII.

Visit to Slabtown, Continued

LAW me, Nancy, why 't would take a week to tell all the sayin's and dewin's that took place in Slabtown in consequence o' that article in the Lady's Book. I never see nor heerd o' nothin' equal to 't. Such a tempest in a tea-pot! such an awful uproar about nothin'! 'T was wonderful—'t was amusin' tew And what was the poor minister's wife about all this time? Why she was to hum, a mindin' her own business as usual. Miss Teeters was heerd to say to several individdiwals, that she guessed that old stripid dress and straw bunnit wouldent darst to show themselves in church no more, when there was such an excitement. But Sunday came and there was the minister's wife in her seat, lookin' jest as if nothin' had happened more 'n or'nary. The members o' the Sewin' Society thought 't was very audacious in her.

'T was cur'us to see how all the persons that was the most active in makin' a noise and keepin up the excitement, had every one on 'em some eend o' their

own that they hoped to forrard by makin' a hue and cry. There was the Slaters, they were dretful mad at the squire's wife, because she hadent invited 'em to her last party. And Mr. Sweezer had told 'em that the squire's wife remarked at her party, that she dident invite the Slaters because she meant to be more select in her parties in futur'. Sweezer's very intimit with the squire's folks—a kind o' boot-licker tew 'em —though he 's always slanderin' 'em to their backs. He 's a reg'lar man-gossip. Well, the Slaters was wonderful tickled to see the squire's wife git such a *dressin' cut*, as they called it; so they went round exultin' over it.

Then ther was a number that was wonderful anxious to git themselves into notice, no matter how. And they blazed away about the *impropriety o' writin' such articles*. They disproved on 'em entirely. But them that was tryin' to git into the squire's wife's good graces, was the most obstropelous about it. They called it abominable—awful! they hoped the squire would take the law o' the minister's wife, and so forth. And some that was rejoiced to git hold o' any thing that could be turned against the minister, went sneakin' round takin' it up in a sly way; they was very sorry it had happened, very; but it was all up with the minister now; he might as well pack up his traps and budge at once; for he couldent be supported in Slabtown no longer, public sentiment was so against

him. Then, tew, ther was a careful set, such as there is every where, that wanted to be "right side up;" and not bein' able to determine for sartin which would turn out to be the popilar party, all they done, when the "Sewin' Society" was mentioned, was to shake their heads and look knowin'. But the tew-sided party was the most numerous. They circulated round from the minister's friends to his enemies, and pretended to belong to jest the side they happened to be with. To the minister's friends they said, "that was a first-rate article in the Lady's Book; 't was capital—'t was true to nater—it took off them that deserved it richly; and they hoped that the author 'd write more, and give 'em another dig." When they got among the opposite party, they said "'t was a slanderous thing—'t was shameful—'t wa'n't to be put up with;" and then they carried back and forth all they heerd on both sides, and made a sight o' mischief. Mr. Sweezer was one o' this kind. He had about as much as he could attend to for a spell, runnin' from one side t' other carryin' the news.

But the most active o' the two-siders was Bethiar Nobles, an old gal that gits her livin' principally by visitin'. She 's acquainted with every thing that goes on in the village; knows every body's business, jest what young folks are ingaged, and who 's broke off their ingagements; who 's ben disappointed, and who 's distracted after who. She knows jest what

couples lives like cats and dogs together, what ones is livin' beyond their means, and who 's over head and ears in debt, and how every lady in town carries on her kitchenary consarns, how scrimpin' they live, and all that. She always has some great excitin' piece o' scandal on her hands that sarves for visitin' capital; and when one wears out she trumps up another. She 's an awful disagreeable old critter, but still ther 's plenty o' folks that 's willin' to incourage her, for the sake o' hearin' her talk. Well, when the Sewin' Society muss come up, she was on her high heels. It gin her plenty o' business for a spell. She visited on the strength on 't for a month at least. As sure as the day come round, off started Bethiar Nobles on her scandal-peddlin' expedition. Wherever she went, the first question she axed was: "Have you seen *that article* in the Lady's Book?" and the next: "What do you think on't?" and what ever *they* thought *she* thought tew, and jawed away accordin'ly, and *spent the day* a tellin' what she heerd on both sides.

One day she went to the minister's and spent the afternoon. After she 'd hauled out her knittin' work, and spread her white handkerchief across her lap for show (she 's an awful snuff-taker, and carries an old red silk one in her pocket for use)—after she 'd hauled out her knittin' work, says she "Have you seen that piece that 's come out in the Lady's Book?"

"I 've seen a number of pieces in the Lady's Book," says the minister's wife, "which one do you refer to?"

"Why, that one about the Sewin' Seoicty that appeared in the Jinuwary number," says Bethiar, says she.

"I havent read that number at all," says the minister's wife. "Mine was borrowed before I 'd had time to open it."

"Well, *I've* seen it," says Bethiar; "and I think it 's complete. I hope the person that writ *that* 'll keed on writin', and give it to 'em again. I never see nothin' to beat that description of the squire's wife—it 's her to a T. They say she *feels* it tew. I 'm glad she does; and I hope it 'll make her draw in her horns and remember her origin, and behave a little more decent. And Miss Teeters, I was glad to see her ketch it—ridicilous critter, neglectin' her children and flirtin' round with the young men all the time. And the Longs; that 's the best o' the hull; I tell ye, it done me good to see *them* cut up. I hope it 'll larn 'em to think for themselves, and not pin their faith to big folkses coat-tails. They never have no opinion o' their own. I dew despise them Longs." The minister's wife interrupted her, and says she—

"Dident you spend the day at Mr. Long's yesterday?"

"Yes," says Berthiar, says she.

"Seems to me it 's strange you should visit people you despise so," says the minister's wife.

Bethiar was rather nonplushed for a minute, and dident seem to know what to say. She hauled out her snuff-box and took a monstrous pinch, and draw'd round her nose one side and snuffed it up, and then draw'd it round t' other side and snuffed it up agin; and when she 'd fixed out what to say, she begun:--

"Yes, I did spend the day there, and it 's the last day I 'll spend there for *one* while, I guess; for they had so much to say aginst you and yer husband that I was perfectly disgusted. They 're awful mad about that piece, and say you writ it. I told 'em, whether you did or not, *I* thought 't was a first-rate thing." So she run on, tellin' ever so much stuff that the Longs had said against the minister and his wife, and all how she tried to stop 'em, and felt so distresst to hear 'em. The minister's wife kept on sewin', and dident make no further remark. Bethiar stayed all the afternoon and evenin', and talked and snuffed, and bored 'em through and through; and then went off declarin' she 'd had a delightful visit.

The next day she went to the squire's —Miss Teeters and Miss Hawkins was there. They was all glad to see Bethiar come in, for they know'd she 'd bring the news. She told 'em she 'd ben to the minister's; and they was wonderful cur'us to know how the minister's wife felt and all she said and done. "Was she a

writin'?" says Miss Teeters. "No," says Bethiar; "not when I went in; she 'd jest tucked it away when she heerd the bell ring. I know'd by the looks o' things that she 'd ben a writin'. She don't keep no help now; and I stayed to tea a purpose to see what sort o' work she made gittin' vittals. When she went out to git tea I offered to go and help her; for I did want to take a peep into the butt'ry and see what condition 't was in—they say these writin' wimmin is such sluttish critters about their houses. But she was tew cunnin' to let me see behind the curtin'. She said she dident need no assistance."

"Why dident you insist upon 't and go ahead, whether or no?" says the squire's wife. "That 's the way I 'd a done."

"Oh," says Bethiar, "she 's so kind o' stiff, I darsent; but I took a good look round when I went into the bed-room to take off my things. I wish to gracious you could see the quilt that 's on her bed! It 's the greatest curiosity in the quiltin' line that ever I sot eyes on—old fashioned herrin' bone, the lines as much as tew inches apart—without stretchin', full tew inches apart!"

It 's cur'us, by the way, what a wonderful time the Slabtown wimmin make about their quilts. There seems to be a continniwal strife there as to who shall git the most stitchin' on a quilt. They crowd and stuff 'em as full o' work as they possibly can. Folks

that's able to buy han'some bed-kivers, never think o' such a thing. But they'll spend ever so many weeks a diggin' away at a home-made bed-quilt, and git the neighbors together time and agin, and stitch, stitch, stitch, stitch, as if their lives depended on 't, and not feel satisfied till every spot as big as a sixpence is kivered with stitches. Eunice had a quiltin' while I was there. My eyes wa'n't good enough to work on the quilt, and Eunice dident seem to be very sorry; for she wa'n't very anxious to have me make my appearance among her genteel friends. So I staid up in my own room. Ther was a stove-pipe hole in the floor from the parlor where they was quiltin', and I could hear 'em talk. Grammany, what a buzzin' they kept up! I tell ye, every body that wa'n't there had to take it, and no mistake. It would have to be a pretty skillful arithmeticker that could calculate how many characters can be pulled to pieces while one quilt 's a puttin' together. But I was tellin' about Bethiar Noble's account o' her visit to the parson's. She went on to tell, and says she—

"And of all the teas that ever I sot down tew, if that wa'n't the beat!" (she praised up every thing sky high while she was eatin' on 't). "Baker's bread as dry as a stick. I s'pose she 's tew lazy to make her own bread, or else she has so much writin' to dew she can't spend time; and the cake—dear knows how

long it had ben baked—and plum-sass as sour as vengeance."

"But what did she say?" says the squire's wife. "That 's the main pint. What did she have to say about the *piece?*"

"She kept pretty mum about *that*, I tell ye," says Bethiar; "for, you see, I pretended I dident know she writ it, so I went on and told *my* opinion pretty freely. I said that I guessed if the writer on 't thought they was a gwine to injure people of such standin' as the squire's wife and Miss Teeters, they 'd find themselves mistaken. She look't awful mad, but never opened her head. Then I spoke o' the Longs, what fine people they was, and said I spent the day before with 'em. When I said that, she spoke up, and say she: 'Well, *I* wouldent visit such despisable people.'"

"She talked against the Longs, hey?" says the squire's wife. "Well, they ought to know it."

"They *shall* know it," says Miss Teeters.

"I thought I should tell 'em on 't," says Bethiar

"Well, they must know it to-day, for to-morrow 's Sunday," says Miss Hawkins. "I s'pose you calculate to spend the afternoon here, so I guess I 'll jest run down myself and give 'em a hint on 't."

Well, I kept a hearin' more and more every day, and what to make on 't, I dident know. 'T was all "Miss Samson Savage, and Miss Sullimar and Miss

Fustick and Miss Birsley.' Thinks me, how on arth has all this about our Sewin' Society got out? and what makes the Slabtown folks think it means them? I was wonderful puzzled, but thought 't wa'n't best to say any thing about it. At last, one day, Sam got hold of a Lady's Book, and fetcht it hum; and Eunice took it and sot down to read the wonderful piece out loud. She turned along till she come to 't, and says she: "Here 'tis—'Aunt Magwire's Account of the Sewin' Society at Scrabble Hill.'" I tell *you*, I jumped as if I was shot: "Grammany," says I, "that means me!" Then it begun to crawl through my hair that the name o' the book was "Godey's Lady's Book," and says I: "I'll bet a dollar it's the same Mr. Godey that I know, and he 's went and printed off that story that I told him about our Sewin' Society." After I got calmed down a little, Eunice went on and read it; and, sure enough, there 't was, word for word, jest as I told it to Mr. Godey. I told 'em so.

"Now, Sam," says I, "you go right off down street, and tell every body that that are 's a ginniwine description of our Scrabble Hill Sewin' Society, and nothin' else."

"I shan't dew it," says Sam. "They wouldent believe a word on 't if I should; and, besides, I like to see the fun go on."

"I say so tew," says Eunice. "If they 're a mind

to take it tew themselves, let 'em; they deserve a usin' up, and I d be the last one to tell 'em they hadent got it."

Well; what to dew, I dident know; I was a stranger there, and couldent go round tellin' how 't was myself. But it did hurt my feelins amazin'ly, to think that the minister's wife was a sufferin' for 't, and that his enemies was a makin' a handle on 't to injure him and drive him away. I pondered on 't, and pondered on 't; and, at last, I made up my mind that the least I could dew would be go to the minister's and explain it tew 'em. So I told Sam and Eunice what I meant to dew. But they tried to persuade me not to. Eunice said 't was all nonsense; she wa'n't acquainted with the minister's wife, but she looked like a very stiff, haughty woman, and she 'd treat me cool, and I 'd have my labor for my pains. But I determined to set my own conscience at rest, so I put on my things and started off. Eunice tried with all her might to stop me, but my mind was made up. Sam wouldent go with me, nor tell me where they lived, so I had to inquire the way as I went. 'T was a moonlight night, and I dident have no trouble in findin' the house; but 't was onpleasant to be out alone in a strange place. When I got to the doorsteps my courage failed, and I was afeard to ring the bell; I dident know but what ther was company in, and dident want to go in if ther was. I noticed a

little crack one side o' the winder shades, so I stepped up softly and peeped in. Ther wa'n't nobody there but the minister's wife; she sot by the table a darnin' stockins, and ther was a big basketful o' duds beside her, that she was a gwine to mend. She looked like a good natered woman. I stood and watched her for some time. As I was a lookin' at her, I noticed a smile come over her face. Thinks me, I'll bet a dollar she's a thinkin' about the "Sewin' Society." A minute after, the smile went off, and she looked troubled and oneasy; thinks me, she's a wonderin' what'll turn up next. It made me think of poor Miss Scrantum, and her troubles. After a spell I plucked up courage and pulled the bell. She come to the door and axed me in; but after I'd got seated, I dident know how to begin nor what to say. The minister's wife see that I felt aukard, so she made some remark about the weather, and so on; then she axed me to take off my things; I thanked her, and said I couldent stay long. At last I ham'd and haw'd, and stammered out: "I hope you'll pardon a stranger for intrudin' on you?" "No intrusion at all," says she; "every body's welcome to the minister's house." So then, I felt relieved, and says I: "I come from Scrabble Hill to visit a relation o' mine that lives here; and I've happened to come just in the midst o' the muss they've kicked up about that piece they're a layin' to you. I know all the folks that it tells about."

"You do?" says she. "And do you know Aunt Magwire?"

I riz up, and makin' as good a curchy as I know'd how, says I: "I 'm that individdiwal, at yer service."

"Indeed," says she, comin' up to me and shakin' hands with me; "well, I 'm very glad to see you though you *have* got me into a muss."

"O dear me," says I, "I hope you don't think I know'd that story was a gwine to travel to Slabtown, when I told it to Mr. Godey?"

"Law, no," says she; "don't give yourself the least trouble about it; you ain't a bit to blame."

"Well, I 'm glad you feel so," says I; "but ain't it curus that the Slabtown folks should take it all to themselves as they dew?"

"Not at all," says she; "human natur 's the same every where."

"I guess so," says I. "Any how, your Sewin' Society must be wonderfully like our 'n, or they wouldent be so determined it means them; but what hurts my feelin's is, that you should have to suffer for 't. I was so distrest when I heerd they was a layin' on 't to you, and usin' on 't to injure yer husband, that I felt as if I must come right over and see you, though you was a stranger. If any body 's to blame, I 'm willin' to bear it."

"O fie," says she, "don't you fret yourself a bit about it. If people choose to fit your coats to their

own backs, 't ain't your fault; and if they fit nice and snug, perhaps they 'll do as good service as if they were made expressly for 'em."

"Jest so," says I. "But it does seem tew bad that you should suffer for 't. Ain't ther no way o' puttin a stop tew it?"

"Never you mind," says she; "we minister's folks must have our trials, of one sort or another, whereever we go. If we hadent this perhaps we should have somethin' still worse."

"But," says I, "what if they should drive you away from here?"

She smiled, and dident say nothin'.

"Well," says I, "to judge from what I've seen o' Slabtown since I come here, I'm bold to say that, if they do drive you away, they can't possibly drive you to a worse place."

"Hush, Aunt Magwire," says she, "human natur s the same every where; we must expect trouble wherever we go. I feel prepared for almost any thing"

"Yes," says I, "I s'pose you feel a good deal as that fox in the story did, when them miserable insects was a bitin' him. 'Let 'em alone,' says he; 'for if you drive 'em away ther 'll come a hungrier swarm.'"

Well that was the amount of our conversation. The minister s wife was very polite to me, and I invited her to call on me if ever she come through

Scrabble Hill. She said she would, and hoped we should git better acquainted.

I come away a few days after that, and I ruther guess it 'll be a good while afore I go a visitin' to Slabtown agin'. The place is tew awful *ginteel* to suit my taste.

XXVIII.

Mrs. Maguire's Account of Deacon Whipple.

HE 'S a mortal teaze, husband is. He does like a joke about as well as any man I ever see. But he 's always good-natured, hain't no malice at heart in his capers. He was a *leetle* wicked though about that are cider hoax he played off on Deacon Whipple and Deacon Bedott. See—did you ever hear about that? Well, I 'll tell you, for I think 't was one o' the cutest tricks he ever come. But in the first place you must know what sort o' a man Deacon Whipple was, or else you won't sense the joke. Well, accordin' to my notion, he was about as contemptible a specimen of a man as ever walked shoe-leather. I always thought so, and so did husband, though ther was a good many folks in Wiggletown looked upon him as clear perfection, 'cause he had so much sanctimony. He come from Meddleville to our town, and he was so wonderful pious, and made such an awful parade of his religion, prayin' and exortin' and laborin' for souls, as he called it, that when he 'd ben there about three months, they made him deacon. As soon as he was promoted,

he begun meddlin' in every body's bizness the worst way, watchin' all the naborhood, and takin' on 'em to dew for every little thing that dident happen to come come up to his idees o' duty. This he called "consarn for the welfare o' Zion." As sure as ther was a party o' young folks, *there* was Deacon Whipple's long nose poked into some o' the winders to pry out what was done. And if ther was any church members among 'em, and they happened to play "Button—button! whose got the button?" or danse round a little, he 'd have 'em hauled up before the session to anser for 't. It seemed to dew him a deal o' good to ketch any o' the brethren or sisters a trippin'. A body 'd a thought he spent the heft of his time a pryin' into other folks' bizness, but some how or other he managed to take care of his own tew; he was a tailor by trade, and a reg'lar old cabbagin' skinflint to boot. That reminds me o' what Jo Snyder said to him once. You see he was an awful stingy critter, and so was Miss Whipple. The 'printices used to complain dretfully o' ther livin'—said they was nigh about starved. Well, Jo Snyder he stuck his head into the shop winder one day and says he (Jo was an independent critter), says he, "Deacon, how comes it you starve yer 'printices so, when you 're always so flush o' cabbage?" The deacon was awful mad. Says he to Jo, "If you was a *professor* you 'd ketch it." He was a monstrous mean-*lookin*' man tew You 'd a know'd to see him in

the street that he was a contracted critter—had a stingy kind of a walk—went along as if he begrudged the room he took up. The circumstance I was a gwine to tell took place when he 'd ben deacon only a little risin' tew year—and it 's a sollem fact, ther 'd ben more cases o' deseplyne in that short time than ther ever was afore sense the place was settled. Now Deacon Bedott wa'n't such a man at all. He was great on prayin' and exortin', but he dident meddle in his nabors' consarns, nor think himself so much picuser and better 'n all the rest o' creation. Well, the next fall arter we come away from Wiggletown, husband and me went out there a visitin'. You see Mother Poole and Mother Magwire both lived there, and Sister Bedott tew, and I spent the time visitin' round from one to t' other. Well, one evenin' I was to Sister Bedott's—husband had gone over to Mother Magwire's. 'T was about a year afore Deacon Bedott died, and he wa'n't very well—you know he was feeble a number o' years afore his death. Well, he and Sister Silly and me was a settin' round the settin'-room fire, and Artemishy Pike—the Widder Pike's oldest darter—she was a spendin' the evenin' there. Artemishy was jest a tellin' us about Deacon Whipple's comin' to thair house the day afore to take Cinthy (her youngest sister) to dew, 'cause he 'd heerd how 't she 'tended a ball when she was over to Varmount a visitin', and Artemishy was in an awful fidgit about

it, for fear he 'd have her hauled up for 't, and she wanted Deacon Bedott to try to prevent it. Well, she was just a tellin' about it when ther come a knock to the door. "Walk in," says Sister Bedott—and who should walk in but Deacon Whipple, with Deacon Kenipe and Deacon Crosby on behind him! "There," says I to Artemishy, "the *Old One* 's always at hand when you 're talkin' about him." "Hush!" says she "Lawful sakes!" says I; "I ain't afeard o' bein' hauled up—I don't live here." When they come in, Artemishy looked half-skairt to death. She thought they 'd come to talk about dealin' with Cinthy, but Sister Bedott whispered tew her, and says she, "Don't be afeard; I don't bleve it 's Cinthy. I guess more likely it 's Sue Collins." ('T was the same time they had *her* over the coals.) Whatever 't was, we all know'd 't was purty important bizness, for Deacon Whipple lookt wonderful *big* and awful sollem: his face was about half a yard long. But though he tried to appear as if he felt dretful bad, 't was plain to be seen he was enjoyin' a state of intarnal satisfaction—lookt jest as he always did when he got hold of a case that suited him to a T. But Deacon Kenipe and Deacon Crosby lookt as if they *raly* felt bad. (They was very clever men indeed.) *They* dident say a word, but Deacon Whipple he convarsed a spell about matters and things in gineral, said the weather was oncommon fine for the season o' year, crops were wonderful

abundant, 'specially the apple crop—though 't was to be lamented that any o' the good critters o' Providence should be abused and turned to the ruination o' man kind as apples was by bein' made into cider. Then he went on to deplore the low state o' religion in the place, axed us wimmin folks about the state of our minds and so on, and then said they 'd come on private bizness and would like to see Deacon Bedott alone a spell. So we three wimmin got up and went into the kitchen. "Now," says Sister Bedott, says she, "I feel as if I 'd like to know what they 've come for—wouldent you?" "Yes," says we. "Well, then," says Silly, "let 's go into the buttry and listen." "Agreed," says we. So in we went. You see ther was a passage between the settin'-room and the kitchen, and on one side o' this passage the buttry was sittiwated; and ther was a door leadin' from the buttry into the settin'-room, and atop o' this door ther was an awful wide crack, so 't a body could hear every word that was said in the settin'-room there. Well, in we goes, as still as mice. Artemishy and me we got up on an old box and peeped through the crack, and Sister Bedott she put her ear to the keyhole. Deacon Whipple had begun to talk afore we got fixed. The first thing I heerd him say, says he, "It 's very onpleasant bizness, very indeed. I assure you it 's very tryin' to my feelins to be necessiated to rebuke a brother, but it seems to be an insurmountable duty in

this case. We 're all poor errin' critters; the best on us is liable to go astray and fail in our duty. I 'm free to confess that *even I* have my shortcomins "—I guess he had an attack on 't when he cut husband's pantaloons; they was so *short* and so tight he had to give 'em to Jeff—"I have my shortcomins, and I feel to mourn for 't; I feel to lament that I 'm fraquently cold and slack in dewin' my duty—don't keep such a constant watch round the walls o' Zion as I 'd ought tew. I feel as if it may be owin' to my onfaithfulness Brother Bedott, that you 've fell into the practice o' such a hyneous offence—ahem——" "Gosh!" says Deacon Bedott, says he—(now Deacon Bedott never used bad language in his life, but once in a while when he was dretfully took by surprise he used to say "*gosh!*")—"Gosh," says he, "I want to know if you was a meanin' me all this time? Well, I 'd like to know what I 've ben a dewin'?" "O dear," says Silly, says she, "it 's husband, it 's husband! What *has* he done—what has he *done?*" "Don't make a fuss," says I; "they 'll hear you, and we shall have to clear out." Deacon Bedott went on; "I ain't aware o' bein' in the practice of any known sin. If I 've done wrong in any way I 'm willin' to be told on 't, and I hope I shall take your rebuke as I 'd ought tew—though as I said afore I ain't aware o' bein' in the practice of any hyneous offense, as you call it." Says Deacon Whipple, says he, with a rael provokin' grin, "I 'm

raly sorry you 're so dull of apprehension, Brother Bedott. It 's truly lamentyble, when a brother, that 's ben apparently a burnin' and shinin' light, turns out to be such a greevious transgresser—when sinners round is in such perishin' need o' havin' good examples sot afore 'em, to make 'em cast down the weapons o' rebellion. And it 's still woss, when such a backslidin' brother is reasoned with, to see him refuse to confess his faults, and repent of his sins and mend his ways." "Dew tell me," says Deacon Bedott, says he, "what the sin *is*, and if I 've raly been guilty on 't, I'll repent, and confess, and forsake it tew." "I' m sorry to see you so obderret," says Deacon Whipple, says he. "You know, Scripter says, if a brother is overtook in a fault, the brother must go tew him and tell him on 't—and if he refuses to hear 'em, why, he must be dealt with afore the congregation; and I 'm afeard that 's what *you 'll* have to come tew, Brother Bedott, if you hold out so." "O misery me!" says Silly, says she, "What has that man ben a *dewin!* what *has* he ben a dewin! O dear me! what an onfortunit woman I be!" "Silly," says I, "why can't you shet yer head? Take my word for 't, he hain't done nothin'—it 'll turn out, to be jest nothin' at all, I 'll bet a goose, so dew be easy." Well, arter Deacon Whipple had gone on so for ever so long, Deacon Bedott got clear out o' patience, and says he, "For massy's sake, what *is* it? Brother Kenipe, Brother Crosby, dew tell me what

't is." "I 'd rather not," says Deacon Kenipe, says he, 'Brother Whipple begun, and he ought to finish." "I say so tew," says Deacon Crosby. "Why," says Deacon Whipple, "it 's curus that Brother Bedott should be so onwillin' to own up, without my comin' right out." "O! dear me, suz!" says Sister Bedott, "that he should be a cuttin' capers, and me never sus pect him on 't! O Melissy, I shall *die!* I *shall* die!' and she begun wringin' her hands like mad. "You simple critter," says I, "dew save yer highsteerics till there 's occasion for 'em; dew keep still, they 'll hear you, sartin sure, and if they should ketch us a listenin', 't would ruin all our three repertations." On account o' Silly's interruption, we lost what Deacon Whipple said next—and the first thing we heerd arter she got quiet agin, was Deacon Bedott sayin' "It 's curus you should be so willin' to believe such a story about me, when you 've know'd me some years, and hain't never heerd nothin' o' the kind till now." "I for one wa'n't willin' to believe it," says Deacon Kenipe; "nor I nother," says Deacon Crosby, says he. "Now, ther ain't no use in denyin' on 't, Brother Bedott," says Deacon Whipple, says he—"A few years ago, 't wa'n't thought to be no great crime, to take a glass o' sperrits now and then; ther wa'n't so much light on the sub ject as ther is now in these ere temperance days; but, even then, 't was eny most an onheerd-of thing for any body, to git intosticated on cider—as you 're in a

habit o' dewin' *now* against light and privelidge—and you a deacon tew—a man that makes such high pretensions O Brother Bedott! it 's a hyneous and a cryin' sin." "Consarn it!" says Deacon Bedott, says he, "dew stop a minnit and let one speak; I want to know, who said I was in a habit o' takin' tew much." "Whoever 't was," says Silly, says she, "they lied, and they know'd it, and I 'll tell Deacon Whipple so—lemme come, Melissy." (It always made Silly awful mad to have any body else run the deacon down, though she used to give it tew him herself, like the dragon sometimes.) "Woman alive," says I, "what be you dewin! you shan't go out there—you 'll jest spile the hull—and we shan't hear another word—it 'll be time enough for you to put in bymeby." She made such a noise, they 'd a heerd her, if they hadent a got to talkin' purty loud themselves. Well, she got still; and the next thing I heerd was Deacon Kenipe sayin', says he, "Brother Whipple, dew come to the pint; dew tell Brother Bedott, who 't was—and don't hurt his feelins any more 'n you can help." "Well, then," says Deacon Whipple, says he, "'t was yer brother-in-law, Mr. Magwire." "Gracious sakes alive!" says Deacon Bedott, says he, "did Josh say that about me? What on arth did the critter mean?" "He meant what he *said*, I s'pose," says Deacon Whipple, "that you 're in a habit o' gittin' *corned* on cider." Says Deacon Bedott, says he, "Did Josh say

he d actilly *seen* me drunk on cider?" "He meant so, ondoubtedly," says Deacon Whipple; "tho' them wa'n't *precisely* the words he used; he called to my shop to-day a purpose to tell me on't, said 't was awful tryin' to his feelins, to be obleeged to expose you, not only on account o' your bein' a connection o hisen, but 'cause he raly thought you was a worthy man in the main; 'but,' says he, 'I dew feel as if I couldent leave Wiggletown with a clear conshence, without tellin' you that I've actilly know'd Deacon Bedott to be the woss for cider!—as true as my name's Joshuway Magwire, I've seen that man half shaved on cider afore breakfast in the mornin'.' Now, though I hain't no very high opinion o' Mr. Magwire, bein' he's a worldly man, and don't know nothin' about experimental religion, I *dew* b'leve, he wouldent tell such a thing as that right out and out, if 't wa'n't true, 'specially about his brother-in-law. I should a went right over to Parson Potter about it, if he 'd ben to hum, but he 's gone a journey, you know. O, how that man will take it to heart, when he hears ther 's such a wolf in sheep's clothin' in the midst o' his flock! So I goes over and tells Brother Kenipe and Brother Crosby on't. They was very onwillin' to come over with me to labor with you to-night. I'm sorry to say, they're ginerally slack about dewin' their duty in cases o' deseplyne—the heft on't comes on to me, and I'm thankful I'm always ready to lift a warnin

voice in sinners' ears, and dew my endeever to reclaim backsliders, and my exartions has been blest beyond my most sanguinary expectations. I hain't expected much help from you on account o' yer poor health; and I feel to rejoice now, that you hain't ben active sence you've turned out to be such a hyneous transgressor—O, Brother Bedott! if you 're half shaved on cider afore breakfast, what must be yer condition afore night! purty well upsot I should think." Deacon Bedott dident say a word; he said afterward he thought he 'd let Brother Whipple go on, and see how much he *would* say. After a minnit Deacon Whipple begun agin' and says he, "Dew you still continue to deny it?" Deacon Bedott never opened his head "Well," says Deacon Whipple, says he, "silence gives consent; so, I s'pose you don't mean to hold out no longer, and say 't ain't a fact. Well 't ain't tew late to repent and reform yet. I hope you 'll make up yer mind, to come forrard next Sabberday, and confess yer besettin' sin afore the congregation; and mabby you 'll go to the temperance meetin' next Saturday night, if you 're able to git out, and give an account o' yer experence in drinkin'—reformed ineebrits does a mense sight of good tellin' the partickler circumstances 'tendin' their downfall and reformation—and, I should think your experence would have an attendancy to be useful as a warnin' to moderit drinkers—by showin' on 'em what they 've got to come tew, if

they ain't nipt in the bud. If you don't consent to dew any or both o' these, why, we 'll have to deal with you, that 's all. We don't want to expose you no more 'n what 's necessary. I hain't said a word about it to nobody, but jest my wife. What dew you say to confession? laffin hey!" (You see, Deacon Bedott begun to grin.) "O, Brother Bedott, what a tremenjuous sinner you be! not only to refuse to confess yer inickities, but laff at 'em! Dew you still continner to deny it?" Jest then, husband bust into the room: and Jo Snyder and Shubal Green and Mr. Smith and Doctor Pike (Artemishy's brother), and Sam Collins (Jue's brother)—they 'd followed the *session* to the house, and ben a listenin' to the door ever sence. Husband, he went straight up to Deacon Bedott and shook his fist in his face, and says he, "Deny it if you darst afore me!—dident I see you half shaved on cider this very mornin'? dident I empty the water out o' yer shavin' cup onbeknown to nobody, while it was a heatin'? and dident I fill it up with some o' Silly's sweet cider she 'd got to make sass on? and was n't I a settin' by when you took it off the stove? and was n't I a lookin' on, when you had such a dretful time a tryin' to make yer lather? and dident I see you scrape and saw away at your face till the blood run? and dident I see you throw down yer razor at last, and declare the old dragon was in it! and was n't you jest about *half shaved* then? say! and dident I

bust out a laffin then, and tell you 't was the fust time I ever see you the woss for cider?—deny it, if you darst." "I plead guilty," says Deacon Bedott, says he. Then we wimmin folks bust out o' the buttry into the settin' room; and ther was such a gineral roarin' and laffin as I never heerd afore nor sence. Deacon Kenipe and Deacon Crosby got up and shook hands with Deacon Bedott and axed his pardin' for comin' over there to take him to dew—and Deacon Bedott, he told 'em, they wa'n't to blame at all—and Silly, she was so tickled; she lafft one minnit, and cried the next, and eny most went into highsteerics: and Artemishy, she laffed, and Mr. Magwire and the men folks they hollered; and you never seen such a time as ther was. Deacon Bedott was a very kind-hearted man, and he thought they was a most tew hard on Deacon Whipple, so he turned round to apol igize to him, and lo and behold! he 'd took advantage o' the commotion and slipt out. But though Deacon Bedott tried to look sober, and told husband 't was tew bad to play off such a joke—'t was plain to be seen he wa'n't sorry to see Deacon Whipple come up with. Poor Deacon Whipple! 't was a humblin' stroke tew him—every body was throwin' on 't in his face—he couldent go no wher, but what *that cider* was throw'd in his face. And Miss Whipple tew—she felt awful mean about it—you see she 'd ben all round the naborhood a tellin' that Deacon Bedott was a drinkin

man. But it cured Deacon Whipple of his *consarn for the welfare o' Zion;* he never made another complaint aginst nobody while he lived there; and about six months afterward, he moved away from Wiggletown.

XXIX.

Mrs. Mudlaw's Recipe for Potato Pudding.

MR. John Darling, a worthy and intelligent mechanic, who has been, for two years past, a resident of our town, was somewhat surprised and considerably gratified one day last fall, at receiving an invitation to dine with Colonel Philpot, one of the aristocracy.

Mr. Darling enjoys that respect in our community which mechanical ingenuity and integrity united are always sure to command every where. These qualities, and a more than ordinary degree of information, acquired by the employment of much of his leisure time in reading, have given him an almost unbounded influence among his own class.

Though the invitation to Colonel P.'s created some surprise in his mind, he felt more disposed to be pleased at the honor than to question the motives which prompted it; for his nature is wholly free from suspicion and the petty feeling of jealousy which those in his station sometimes indulge toward the "upper ten"

—feelings with which, we are sorry to say, the bosom of his better half was frequently agitated.

"We have been neighbors for some time, Mr. Darling," said Colonel Philpot; "it is time we were better acquainted. You must come and dine socially with me to-morrow. Mrs. Philpot and the children are out of town, and I am going to have a few friends to enliven my solitude."

So John Darling "saved his appetite," dressed himself in his best clothes, and, at the appointed hour—a somewhat later one than his customary time for dining—repaired to Colonel Philpot's.

He met there several of his associates—had a "fine time and a grand dinner"—the utmost hilarity and good feeling prevailed; and Mr. Darling entertained his wife with an account of it at every meal for several weeks.

"Hester," said he one day, as they were seated at a codfish dinner, "did you ever taste a potato pudding?"

"Potato pudding! No; I never heerd of such a thing."

"Well, I wish you could, for 't is delicious! We had one when I dined at Colonel Philpot's."

"I wonder what you *did n't* have at Colonel Philpot's," said Mrs. Darling. "I declare, I 'm tired hearing about it."

"Well, I 'll tell you one thing we did n't have—we

did n't have *codfish*. But, that pudding—I wish you'd learn how to make it; it was superb!"

"I presume so; and I guess, if I had half a dozen servants at my heels, and a thorough-trained cook into the bargain, I could have things superb, too. But, as long as I have every thing to do myself, and very little *to do with*, I don't see how I 'm to get up things in style. I wonder you can expect me to."

"I don't expect you to, Hester. You always do things to suit my taste. But that pudding was excellent; and, being made of potatoes, I thought, of course it must be economical, and—"

"Economical! That 's all you know about it. What gumps men are! I'll warrant it had forty different things in it, and less potatoes than any thing else. I'm no hand to fuss up. I like plain cookery, for my part."

"So do I, as a general thing. But then, you know, it 's well to have something a little better than ordinary once in a while."

"Well, if you 're not satisfied with my way of doing things, you must hire a cook, or go and board out." And Mrs. Darling put on her *injured look*, and remained silent during the rest of the dinner.

But, after all, she was not an ill-natured woman really; and, after her husband had gone to his shop, she began to feal a little pricked in her conscience for having been so cross at dinner. She wished she had

not *gone on* at such a rate. But, then, John had bored her so about that dinner at Colonel Philpot's, she was out of patience with it. Yet what right had she to be out of patience with John? He never was out of patience with her, and she could but acknowledge that he often had reason to be so. So she resolved to *make it up* as soon as possible.

"John," said she, as she handed him a cup of tea, "I've a great notion to try that potato pudding. I believe I could make one."

"No doubt of it, Hester," said her husband; "you can do almost any thing you try to."

"I suppose it takes butter, and sugar, and eggs, and spices, and so forth; but I wish I knew the proportions."

"It 's very easy to find out all about it by calling at Colonel Philpot's. He said his wife would be delighted to get acquainted with you."

"So you 've told me a dozen times; but I think that, if she wanted to get acquainted with me, she might call upon me. She 's lived here longer than I have, and it is n't my place to call first; and I don't believe the colonel tells the truth when he says she wants to get acquainted with me."

"Well, I always think people mean as they say, and I wish you would, too, Hester."

"But it 's very evident that she holds herself a great deal above me. She has no reason to, certainly, for

her family was n't half as respectable as mine. Mrs. David Potter knows all about them, root and branch, and she says that Mrs. Philpot's father kept a very low tavern in Norridge, and Mrs. Philpot herself tended the bar when she was a girl. But, somehow, Colonel Philpot happened to fall in love with her, and he sent her away to school, and then married her."

"Well, that 's nothing against her, is it?"

"No, of course it would n't be, if she did n't carry her head so high now. But it 's always the way with such persons—they never know how to bear prosperity. There would n't be any thing said about her origin, if she did n't put on such airs; but, as long as she feels so lifted up, folks *will talk* you know."

"Perhaps you don't do her justice, Hester. You know nothing about her excepting what you 've heard. At any rate, it would do no harm to call upon her."

After repeated conversations and discussions of this sort, Mrs. Darling concluded to pay Mrs. Philpot a visit. She could make the potato pudding an excuse, and be governed by Mrs. P.'s reception in regard to further intercourse. Mrs. Philpot has been, for several years past, to use her own expression, "very unfortunate in her domestics." With the exception of her cook—up to the time of Mrs. Darling's call—she had seldom kept one above a month, and sometimes not as long as that. This frequent change of servants was not so much owing to any unkindness on Mrs. Phil

pot's part, as to the fact that Mrs. Mudlaw, her cook, could never agree with them. This functionary had been, for several years, a fixture in Colonel P.'s establishment; indeed, Mrs. P. declared she could not possibly get along without her. Mrs. Mudlaw was in fact, a good cook, and so entirely relieved that lady from all care in that department that, rather than part with her, she was willing to submit to her petty tyranny in every thing. The cook actually "ruled the roast" at Colonel P.'s in more than one sense. And she did not often find the subalterns of the household as submissive to her wishes as Mrs. Philpot herself was. She contrived to quarrel them away in a short time, for she had only to say to Mrs. P., "Well, either Bridget or I must quit, so you may take your choice;" and the offending servant-maid was dismissed forthwith, there being no appeal from Mrs. Mudlaw's decision.

A scene of this kind had just occurred when Mrs. Darling made her visit, and a new raw Irish girl had that morning been installed in place of the one discharged. The duty of this girl was to answer the door-bell, and help Mrs. Mudlaw. In fact, the hardest and most disagreeable of the kitchen-work came upon her. When Mrs. Darling rang, Mrs. Philpot was in the kitchen giving instructions to Peggy, or rather acquiescing in those which Mrs. Mudlaw was laying down.

"There goes the bell," said that important personage, and Mrs. Philpot hastened to an upper window to see who it was. Having satisfied herself, she came back and told Peggy to go and admit the lady.

"Why don't you start, you?" said Mrs. Mudlaw.

"Well, what 'll I do now?" said Peggy, whirling round in that bewildered way peculiar to Irish girls.

"Do!" roared Mudlaw. "Don't you know nothin'? Hain't we jest been tellin' ye 't was your duty to tend to the door-bell? Run to the front door and let 'em in, and show 'em into the drawin'-room. You know where that is, don't you?"

"Faith, I know *that*," answered Peggy, and away she ran, thanking her stars that there was at least one thing that she knew.

"It 's no one that I know, I 'm sure," said Mrs. Philpot, after Peggy had gone; "at least the bonnet and shawl are not familiar to me. I presume it is somebody I don't care about seeing."

"I should n't wonder," said Mudlaw. "But I s'pose you could n't do otherways, as the curnel has given orders that nobody ain't to be refused till after *'lection*."

With much confusion and toe-stubbling, the unfortunate Peggy ushered Mrs. Darling into the nursery, which was also Mrs. Philpot's ordinary sitting-room. It was directly over the kitchen, and heated by the cooking stove by the means of a drum, or dummy, as

Mrs. Mudlaw called it. Every word that was said in the kitchen could easily be heard in the nursery—quite a convenience to Mudlaw, as it enabled her often to communicate with Mrs. Philpot without the trouble of going up stairs. Many an interesting account of what she did when Mr. Mudlaw was living, and how they managed at General K.'s when she *was staying* there, has gone up that stove-pipe.

The nursery was in a state of the greatest disorder, as was usually the case, though the children were all out just then. Sukey the nurse-girl, had taken the baby out to ride, and Philip Augustus had gone with them; and Zoe Matilda was at school. Playthings of every description, carts, horses, dolls, as well as children's books and clothes, were scattered about the room in what Mrs. Darling called "awful confusion." But she had not time for inward comments upon this state of things, before her attention was called to the conversation below.

"It 's Mrs. Darling as wushes to see you mum." said Peggy.

"*That* Mrs. Darling! Did you ever!" exclaimed Mrs. Philpot.

"She ain't nobody, is she?" said Mrs. Mudlaw.

"Nobody at all. Her husband is a cabinet-maker but the colonel has charged it upon me to be polite to her jest now. He wished me to call upon her; but I would n't condescend to stoop so low as that, though

he made me promise to treat her with attention if she called."

"Well, I wouldent do it, if I was you," said the cook. "I 'd be mistress in my own house any how."

"But, you know, it 's for his interest now. He says that Darling has a great deal of influence among mechanics—can command a good many votes."

"Oh, I remember now! he 's one of them codgers that dined here while you was away, that the curnel was a laughin' about afterward, and telling you how awkward they handled the silver forks."

"Yes; is n't it provoking to have to be polite to such people? Well, I shall be glad when 'lection 's over, for the colonel says I may cut them all then, and I think it won't be long before they sink back to their own level." And Mrs. Philpot arose with a sigh, and ascended to the drawing-room, arranging her features into a gracious and patronizing expression as she went.

Mrs. Darling's feelings during this conversation "can be better imagined than described," as the novels would say. Her first impulse was to leave the house without waiting for Mrs. Philpot's appearance, and she rose and made a few steps with that intention; but, on second thoughts, she resolved to remain, and let her know that she only came on an errand, and resumed her seat.

When Mrs. Philpot found no one in the drawing-

room she returned to the kitchen, supposing that her visitor had gone.

"She 's gone," said she, "without waiting for me. She does n't know enough about good society to understand that a lady does n't make her appearance the moment she 's called for."

"I should n't wonder if she was in the nursery all the time," said Mudlaw; "for I heard a stepping up there a while ago, and the children hain't got home yet. Where did you take her to, you?"

"Why, I tuck her in the dhrawin'-room, sure, as you tould me, right overhid," said Peggy, in some alarm.

"You blunderin' Irish gumphead! Don't you know the drawin' room from the nursery?"

"Och! but I thought it was the dhrawin'-room; for dident I see the young masther a dhrawin' his cart, and was n't Shukey a dhrawin' the baby about the floore by its feet, when I went up to take the wather this mornin'?"

"There, I told you she was a born fool!" said Mudlaw, in a rage. "She 'll never know nothing—she 'll never learn nothing—you may as well send her off first as last."

"Hush! don't speak so loud," said Mrs. Philpot, in a whisper. "She can hear all you say—she *has* heard enough already. Dear me, what *shall* I do? The colonel will be so provoked! How could you be so

dumb, Peggy? Run right up and take her into the drawing-room. Stop! you need n't; you will make some other mistake. I 'll go myself."

In a state of mind not to be envied, Mrs. Philpot hastened to the nursery. But as she entertained a faint hope that the conversation below had not penetrated through Mrs. Darling's bonnet, she endeavored to hide her embarrassment under an affable smile, extended her hand gracefully, and drawled out a genteel welcome to her visitor.

"Delighted to see you, Mrs. Darling; but very sorry you should have been brought into the nursery" —no wonder she 's sorry, thought Mrs. Darling— "these raw Irish girls are so stupid! Walk into the parlor, if you please."

"No, I thank you, Mrs. Philpot, I 'd as soon sit here," returned Mrs. Darling. "I can only stay a moment I called to ask for a recipe for potato pudding. Mr. Darling tasted one when he dined with Colonel Philpot, and liked it so much that he wished me to get directions for making it."

"Potato pudding? Ah, yes, I recollect. Mudlaw, my cook, does make a very good plain thing that she calls a potato pudding; but I know nothing about her manner of preparing it. I will call her, however, and she shall tell you herself." Thereupon she pulled the bell, and Peggy shortly appeared, looking more frightened and bewildered than ever.

"Send Mudlaw here," said Mrs. Philpot.

She would not have dared to address her "chief cook and bottle-washer" without the respectful title of *Mrs.;* but it was rather more grand to omit it, and she always did so when not in her hearing.

"The missus said I was to send you there," said Peggy.

"*You* send *me!*" exclaimed the indignant cook. "I guess when I go for *your* sending, it 'll be after this."

Mrs. Philpot, although conversing in a condescending manner with Mrs. Darling, caught something of the cook's reply to her summons, and asked to be excused for a moment, saying that Peggy was so stupid, she feared that Mudlaw might not understand her, and she would go herself and send her. So she hastened down to the kitchen, where she found the head functionary standing on her dignity.

"Pretty well," said she, "if I am to be ordered round by an Irish scullion!"

"Mrs. Mudlaw, step here a moment, if you please," said Mrs. Philpot meekly, opening the door of an adjoining room.

The offended lady vouchsafed to comply with the request, and with a stern aspect, entered the room with Mrs. Philpot. The latter closed the door for fear of being heard overhead, and began—

"What do you think, Mrs. Mudlaw? That Mrs.

Darling has come to learn how to make potato pudding, and you 'll have to go up and tell her."

"I sha'n't do it. I make it a point never to give my recipes to nobody."

"I know it; and, I 'm sure I don't blame you. But, in this case—just now—I really don't see how we can refuse."

"Well, I sha'n't do it, and that 's the hull on 't."

"Oh, do, Mrs. Mudlaw, just this once. The colonel is so anxious to secure Darling, and he will be so angry if we offend them in any way."

"But he needent know it, need he?"

"He certainly will find it out by some means. I know it is real vexatious to you, and I would n't ask it if election was over; and now 't is very important —it may save us all trouble. The colonel is so decided you know."

These last words of Mrs. Philpot had an effect upon Mudlaw which no wish or entreaty of that lady would have ever produced, for they suggested to her selfish mind the possibility of a dismissal from her snug birth at Colonel P.'s, where she carried it with a high hand; so she gave in.

"Well, jest to please you and the curnel, I 'll do it; but I wish 'lection was over."

Mrs. Philpot returned to the nursery, and Mrs. Mudlaw took off her apron, changed her cap for one trimmed with pink ribbons and blue roses, gave nu

merous orders to Peggy and followed. She was a short, fat woman, with a broad red face—such a person as a stranger would call the very personification of good nature; though I have never found fat people to be any more amiable than lean ones. Certainly, Mrs. Mudlaw was not a very sweet tempered woman On this occasion, she felt rather more cross than usual, forced, as she was, to give one of her recipes to a nobody. She, however, knew the necessity of assuming a pleasant demeanor at that time, and accordingly entered the nursery with an encouraging grin on her blazing countenance. Mrs. Philpot, fearing lest her cook's familiarity might belittle her mistress in the eyes of Mrs. Darling, and again asking to be excused for a short time, went into the library, a nondescript appartment, dignified by that name, which communicated with the nursery. The moment she left her seat, a large rocking-chair, Mudlaw dumped herself down it, exclaiming—

"Miss Philpot says you want to get my recipe for potater puddin'?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Darling. "I would be obliged to you for the directions." And she took out of her pocket a pencil and paper to write it down.

"Well, 't is an excellent puddin'," said Mudlaw complacently; "for my part, I like it about as well as any puddin' I make, and that 's sayin' a good deal, I can tell you, for I understand makin' a great variety

'T ain't so awful rich as some, to be sure. Now, there 's the Cardinelle puddin', and the Washington puddin', and the Lay Fayette puddin', and the—"

"Yes. Mr. Darling liked it very much—how do you make it?"

"Wal, I peel my potaters and bile 'em in fair water. I always let the water bile before I put 'em in. Some folks let their potaters lie and sog in the water ever so long, before it biles; but I think it spiles 'em. I always make it a pint to have the water bile—"

"How many potatoes?"

"Wal, I always take about as many potaters as I think I shall want. I 'm generally governed by the size o' the puddin' I want to make. If it 's a large puddin', why I take quite a number, but if it 's a small one, why, then I don't take as many. As quick as they 're done, I take 'em up and mash 'em as fine as I can get 'em. I 'm always very partic'lar about *that*—some folks ain't; they 'll let their potaters be full o' lumps. *I* never do; if there 's any thing I hate, it 's lumps in potaters. I *won't* have 'em. Whether I 'm mashin' potaters for puddin's or for vegetable use, I mash it till there ain't the size of a lump in it. If I can't git it fine without sifting, why I *sift* it. Once in a while, when I 'm otherways engaged, I set the girl to mashin' on 't. Wal, she 'll give it three or four jams, and come along, 'Miss Mudlaw, is the potater fine enough?' Jubiter Rammin! that 's the time I

come as near gittin mad as I ever allow myself to come, for I make it a pint never to have lumps—"

"Yes, I know it is very important. What next?"

"Wal, then I put in my butter; in winter time I melt it a little, not enough to make it ily, but jest so 's to soften it."

"How much butter does it require?"

"Wal I always take butter accordin' to the size of the puddin'; a large puddin' needs a good sized lump o' butter, but not *too much.* And I'm always partic'lar to have my butter fresh and sweet, Some folks think it 's no matter what sort o' butter they use for cookin', but *I* don't. Of all things, I do despise strong frowy, rancid butter. For pity's sake have your butter fresh."

"How much butter did you say?"

"Wal, that depends, as I said before, on what sized puddin' you want to make. And another thing that regulates the quality of butter I use is the 'mount o' cream I take. I always put in more or less cream; when I have abundance o' cream, I put in considerable and when it 's scarce, why, I use more butter than I otherways should. But you must be partic'lar not to get in too much cream. There 's a great deal in havin' jest the right quantity; and so 'tis with all the ingrejiences. There ain't a better puddin' in the world than a potato puddin', when it 's made *right*, but 't ain 't every body that makes 'em right. I remember when

I lived in Tuckertown, I was a visitin' to Squire Humprey's one time—I went in the first company in Tuckertown—dear me! this is a changeable world. Wal, they had what they called a potato puddin' for dinner, Good land! Of all the puddins! I 've often occured to that puddin' since, and wondered what the Squire's wife was a thinkin' of when she made it. I wa 'n t obleeged to do no such things in them days, and dident know how to do any thing as well as I do now. Necessity 's the mother of invention. Experience is the best teacher, after all—"

"Do you sweeten it?"

"Oh, yes, to be sure it needs sugar, the best o' sugar, too; not this wet, soggy, brown sugar. Some folks never think o' usin' good sugar to cook with, but for my part I won't have no other."

"How much sugar do you take?"

"Wal, that depends altogether on whether you calculate to have sass for it—some like sass, you know, and then some agin don't. So, when I calculate for sass, I don't take so much sugar; and when I don t calculate for sass, I make it sweet enough to eat without sass. Poor Mr. Mudlaw was a great hand for puddin'sass. I always made it for him—good, rich sass too. I could afford to have things rich before he was unfortinate in bizness." (Mudlaw went to State's prison for horse stealing.) "I like sass myself, too; and the curnel and the children are all great sass

hands; and so I generally calculate for sass, though Miss Philpot prefers the puddin' without sass, and perhaps *you'd* prefer it without. If so you must put in sugar accordingly. I always make it a pint to have 'em sweet enough when they're to be eat without sass."

"And don't you use eggs?"

"Certainly, eggs is one o' the principal ingrejiences."

"How many does it require?"

"Wal, when eggs is plenty, I always use plenty; and when they're scarce, why I can do with less, though I'd ruther have enough; and be sure and beat 'em well. It does distress me, the way some folks beat eggs. I always want to have 'em thoroughly beat for every thing I use 'em in. It tries my patience most awfully to have any body round me that won't beat eggs enough. A spell ago we had a darkey to help in the kitchen. One day I was a makin' sponge cake, and havin' occasion to go up stairs after something, I sot her to beatin' the eggs. Wal, what do you think the critter done? Why, she whisked 'em round a few times, and turned 'em right onto the other ingrejiences that I'd got weighed out. When I come back and saw what she'd done, my gracious! I came as nigh to losin' my temper as I ever allow myself to come. 'T was awful provokin'! I always want the kitchen help to do things as I want to have

'em done. But I never saw a darkey yet that ever done any thing right. They 're a lazy slaughterin' set. To think o' her spilin' that cake so, when I 'd told her over and over agin that I always made it a pint to have my eggs thoroughly beat!"

"Yes, it was too bad. Do you use fruit in the pudding?"

"Wal, that 's jest as you please. You 'd better be governed by your own judgment as to *that*. Some like currants and some like raisins, and then agin some don't like nary one. If you use raisins, for pity's sake pick out the stuns. It 's awful to have a body's teeth come grindin' onto a raisin stun. I 'd rather have my ears boxt any time."

"How many raisins must I take?"

"Wal not *too* many—it 's apt to make the puddin' heavy, you know; and when it 's heavy it ain't so light and good. I 'm a great hand—"

"Yes, what do you use for flavoring?"

"There agin you 'll have to exercise your own judgment. Some likes one thing, and some another, you know. If you go the whole figger on temperance, why some other kind o' flavyrin' 'll do as well as wine or brandy, I s'pose. But whatever you make up your mind to use, be partic'lar to git in a sufficiency, or else your puddin' 'll be flat. I always make it a pint—"

"How long must it bake?"

"There 's the great thing after all. The bakin's the main pint. A potater puddin', of all puddins, has got to be baked jest right. For if it bakes a leetle too much, it 's apt to dry it up; and then agin if it don't bake quite enough, it 's sure to taste potatery--and that spiles it, you know."

"How long should you think?"

"Wal, that depends a good deal on the heat o' your oven. If you have a very hot oven, 't won't do to leave it in too long; and if your oven ain't so very hot, why, you 'll be necessiated to leave it in longer."

"Well, how can I tell any thing about it?"

"Well, I always let them bake till I think they 're done—that 's the safest way. I make it a pint to have 'em baked exactly right. It 's very important in all kinds o' bakin'—cake, pies, bread, puddins, and every thing—to have 'em baked *precisely* long enough and jest right. Some folks don't seem to have no system at all about their bakin'. One time they 'll burn their bread to a crisp, and then agin it 'll be so slack 't ain't fit to eat. Nothin' hurts my feelins so much as to see things overdone or slack-baked. Here only t' other day, Lorry, the girl that Miss Philpot dismissed yesterday, come within an ace o' letting my bread burn up. My back was turned for a minnit, and what should she do but go to stuffin' wood into the stove at the awfullest rate? If I hadent a found it out jest when I did, my bread would a ben spilt as

sure as I'm a live woman. Jubiter Rammin! I was about as much decomposed as I ever allow myself to git! I told Miss Philpot I wouldent stan' it no longer —one of us must quit—either Lorry or me must walk."

"So you've no rule about baking this pudding?"

"No rule!" said Mudlaw, with a look of intense surprise.

"Yes," said Mrs. Darling, "you seem to have no rule for any thing about it."

"No rule!" screamed the indignant cook, starting up, while her red face grew ten times redder, and her little black eyes snapped with rage. "No rules!" and she planted herself in front of Mrs. Darling, erecting her fleshy figure to its full hight of majestic dumpiness, and extending the forefinger of her right hand till it reached an alarming propinquity to that lady's nose "No rules! do *you* tell *me* I've no rules! Me! that 's cooked in the first families for fifteen years, and always gi'n satisfaction, to be told by such as *you* that I hain't no rules!"

Thus far had Mudlaw proceeded, and I know not to what length she would have "allowed herself" to go had not the sudden entrance of Colonel Philpot interrupted her He being a person of whom she stood somewhat in awe, particularly "jest at this time," she broke off in the midst of her tirade, and, casting a look of ineffable disgust at Mrs. Darling, retreated to

her own dominions to vent her fury upon poor Peggy who had done every thing wrong during her absence.

While Colonel Philpot was expressing his extreme satisfaction at seeing Mrs. Darling, Mrs. Philpot emerged from the library, where she had been shaking in her shoes during the interview between that lady and Mudlaw.

"Matilda, my dear," said the colonel, "this is quite an unexpected pleasure, for really Mrs. Darling, we began to fear that you did not intend to cultivate us."

"I did not come for that purpose," replied Mrs. Darling, who, now that she saw through Colonel Philpot, despised him thoroughly, and was not afraid to let him know it, notwithstanding he belonged to the aristocracy of our town. "I came on an errand, and your cook has got very angry with me for some reason, I scarcely know what."

"Poor Mudlaw," said Mrs. Philpot, anxious to screen her main stay from the colonel's displeasure, yet feeling the necessity of some apology to Mrs. Darling. "Poor Mudlaw! I don't think she intended to be rude."

"What! has the cook been rude to Mrs. Darling?" exclaimed Colonel Philpot.

"Not rude, exactly, dear; but you know she is so sensitive about every thing connected with her depart

ment, and she fancied that Mrs. Darling called her skill into question, and became somewhat excited."

"*Quite* excited, I should call it," said Mrs. D. with a smile.

"And she has dared to treat Mrs. Darling rudely," said Colonel P., apparently much agitated. "Shameful! disgraceful! the wretch shall suffer for it! To think that a lady like Mrs. Darling should be insulted by a *cook!* in my house, too!"

"And just before *election*, too; it is a pity!" said Mrs Darling quietly, as she rose, and wishing them good-morning, departed, leaving Colonel Philpot lost in astonishment. Her last remark rendered necessary some explanation from Mrs. P. She was compelled to repeat some part of the conversation that had taken place in the kitchen, which, though softened down as much as possible, was sufficient to rouse the colonel's indignation to the highest pitch, for he saw at once that Darling was lost. He gave his silly wife a hearty blowing up, but upon Mudlaw, his wrath fell heaviest. No entreaties of her mistress could save her; she was commanded to quit the premises, to *troop forthwith* "for being rude to visitors." But Mudlaw knew well enough the real reason of her dismissal, and when she went forth in rage and sorrow, she found some consolation in spreading it far and wide, thereby making Colonel Philpot very ridiculous in the eyes of the community.

"Well, I'm surprised, Hester," said John Darling, after his wife had given him a circumstantial account of her visit. "And I'm right sorry, too, to have my good opinion of a man knocked in the head so, for I did think well of Col. Philpot. I really believed we could n't send a better man to Congress. But it won't do. A man that can stoop to such conduct is n't fit to go there. I can't vote for him, and my influence, what little I have, must go against him. If he gets there, it must be without any help from John Darling."

Colonel Philpot did *not* go to Congress, and what made his defeat the more aggravating was the fact that his opponent was elected by the small majority of three votes. And so Colonel Philpot lost his election; and Mrs. Philpot lost her cook; and Mr. Darling lost his esteem for Colonel Philpot, and all through the over-politeness of the latter.

And was there nothing gained? Oh, yes; Mrs. Darling gained something. Not much information in regard to the potato pudding, certainly; but she gained some knowledge of the internal arrangements of Mrs. Philpot's household, which proved of great service to her, for she confesses to John that she was never so contented with her own home and her own husband as she has been since she made that memorable call at Colonel Philpot's.

XXX.

Morning Calls; or, Every body's Particular Friend.

'GOOD morning, Miss Mary!"

"Good morning, Mrs. Shaw!"

"I'm well aware that I don't owe any call here, but I told Mr. Shaw that the morning was *so* fine, I'd just step in and see whether you were all alive, for really it seems an age since I saw any of you—you've not been at all neighborly of late."

"I know it, Mrs. Shaw, but you must excuse us, for grandmother has been so feeble for some weeks past that we have not been able to leave—mother is with her now and desires to be excused."

"Certainly; she is very excusable. I was not aware that your grandmother was sick—I'm excessively sorry to hear it—should assuredly have been round to see her before had I been aware of her illness. I *do* think *so* much of your grandmother—she is certainly the sweetest old lady that I ever knew. I tell Mr. Shaw she reminds me *so* much of my own dear dead mother—has the same dignified manner and benevolent countenance that she had And her char

acter is very much like my mother's, too, always doing good among the poor and sick. I regret excessively that I was not aware of her illness—should certainly have been round, though my own health has been very precarious—in fact, it always is—I go out very little—none at all excepting among my particular friends. I *do* hope your grandma 'll be spared—we *could n't* part with her any way—there are *so* few like her on earth—and the poet says "Heaven is overflowing." Ah! I see you have Dickens' last here—I suppose it 's excessively interesting."

"No—I think it 's hardly worth reading."

"Indeed! well, of course I shall not read it if you condemn it—you are such an excellent judge of literature, and *such* a reader—your own productions, too, are exquisite—Mr. Shaw is perfectly charmed with them. What a beauty your japonica is, I noticed it last evening in passing. Ah! that reminds me they tell stories about you, Mary."

"Indeed! what do *they* say about me, pray?"

"O, they say you 're going to be married."

"The deuce I am! To whom are *they* going to marry me?"

"My stars! I protest you counterfeit astonishment to perfection. Of course the favored one is George Carter—and I assure you, Mary, you 're quite the envy of all the girls for snapping him up so soon after his return from Europe."

'You surprise me Mrs. Shaw. I've seen very little of George Carter since he came home."

"Ah, do you think I shall believe you when appearances are so very strong against you? Did n't I see somebody's curly dog lying on somebody's piazza last evening?"

"And seeing a puppy *outside* of the door, it was very natural for *you* to infer that there was another one *inside*."

"O Mary, what a creature you are! You have such a ready wit. Mr. Shaw says he never knew your equal in that respect—he *does* admire wit in a lady, excessively. But I 'll not detain you—give my love to your ma, and your grandma, too—and tell her how deeply interested I feel in her—I do hope she 'll recover. And do you and your ma come round and see us as soon as you can. Serapheen and I think *so* much of seeing our friends—your ma and you particularly—and we're *so* lonely since Angeleen went to New York."

"Have you heard from Angeleen lately?"

"Yes, we received a letter yesterday. She says, give my love to all the girls, but particularly to Mary Barber. Angel does think *so* much of you. (Miss Barber bows.) She 's enjoying herself excessively—sees a great deal of company. You know how it is in the city, Mary—you 've spent so much time there

She says she dreads coming back to this dull place excessively."

"Well then I hope she'll *snap up* somebody in the city, and not be compelled to come back here."

"What a quiz you are, Mary! but I *must* go—give my love to your ma, and do come round when you can. Good morning."

"Good morning, Mrs. Shaw."

Her next call is at Dr. More's.

"Good morning, Caroline. Is your ma at home?"

"She is. She's engaged jest now in the kitchen, but she'll be in shortly."

"Now don't let me hinder you if your engaged about any thing—just take me right in where you're at work."

"Well, then, walk into the sitting-room, if you please—Charlotte and I are sewing there."

"Good morning, Charlotte! Dress-making, eh? Is that for you or Caroline?"

"For me—but Caroline has one like it. Do you think it pretty?"

"I do *so*. Those large plaids are excessively becoming to a tall slender person like you and Caroline —but Mary Barber looks wretchedly in them—she's *so* short and *so* thick. I was just in there—she had on a plaid, the squares, without exaggeration, as large as my two hands—it was blue, too, and you know she is *so* dark."

"I should think it would be unbecoming to her—but Mary cares very little for dress, I think."

"She does *so*—an unpardonable fault in a young lady, in my opinion. Mr. Shaw thinks a young lady should be always neatly and becomingly dressed. He was speaking of it the other day, and contrasting your two girls with Mary Barber. 'But,' said he, 'Mary might be ever so well dressed and she would n't look any how with such a form as she has.' You were passing our house at the time—said he, 'there 's a couple of the finest forms in Greenville.' Mr. Shaw *does* admire a fine form in a lady excessively. But Mary 's so busy writing those nonsensical stories and stuff that she has no time to think of her personal appearance. Did you ever read any thing *so* flat? What a pity that she so mistakes her talent. Mr. Shaw laughs about it—he *does* dislike a blue stocking excessively. And, Caroline, don't you think Mary is very unrefined in her conversation?"

"I think she 's rather abrupt, sometimes."

"Abrupt! my stars! I tell Mr. Shaw that what she intends for wit, I call essential vulgarity; and Mr. Shaw agrees with me—he does dislike such things in a young lady, excessively. I think she 's rather censorious too—for instance she pronounced George Carter a puppy—at which I confess I am astonished."

"Well, I 'm astonished too—for I think George Carter a fine fellow."

"He is so, Charlotte. Serapheen thinks him decidedly elegant; and you know she 's competent to give an opinion—having passed two winters in New York, where she saw a great deal of gentlemen's society. I was excessively sorry to hear Mary speak so; but I hope you won't repeat it; at least don't mention it as coming from me. I merely alluded to it because I felt so indignant at the remark."

"Good morning, Mrs. Shaw."

"Good morning, Mrs. More; how 's your health?"

"Very good, indeed—are you well, Mrs. Shaw?"

"Oh, no, Mrs. More. I 'm miserable; indeed I ought to be at home and in bed now; but I told Mr. Shaw that the morning was *so* fine, I must come round to see you. I don't pretend to call except upon my particular friends. Mr. Shaw often tells me I make a complete hermit of myself—I hope I 'm not hindering you this morning, Mrs. More."

"Oh, not at all—you must excuse me for not coming in sooner. I was just baking and could n't well leave my bread."

"Just *so*—you 're very excusable—you do your own work, Mrs. More, I believe."

"Yes, our family is small—only Dr. More and us three—and since the girls were old enough to help me, I 've preferred doing without servants."

"Well now—what a grand thing that is! I tell Mr. Shaw I should be so delighted if I could get along

without servants—they are *such* a plague! but situated as we are, it would be utterly impossible. The girls are very industrious—I 've instructed them in that respect—but they are away so much; our relatives in the city insist upon having one of them there most of the time; and my health is *so* precarious that I can do very little. And then, when the girls *are* at home, they are necessarily *so* much occupied with their company and music. *Your* daughters are not musicians, I believe, Mrs. More?"

"No—they have never shown any fondness for music—at least no decided talent for it; and their father thought it would be a useless expense to have them take lessons."

"It would *so*, Mrs. More—Mr. Shaw and myself would never have thought of such a thing as having Angeleen and Serapheen learn music, if they had not shown such an extraordinary talent for it, from their very infancy. It 's utter nonsense for children to study any thing they have n't a taste for, especially music. I think you acted very judiciously."

"Have you heard from Angeleen, lately?"

"Yes, Caroline—I had a letter from her yesterday. She is passing her time very pleasantly at her uncle's —but she says she *does* want to see her pa and ma and sis, and you and Charlotte very much indeed. She says, 'give my love to all the girls, but *particularly* to Caroline and Charlotte More.' Angel *does* think *so*

much of her friends—especially your two girls. Seeing you making a sleeve, Charlotte, reminds me that she speaks of the fashions. She says they 're wearing that kind of sleeve now very much. Who cuts your dresses, Lotty? they always fit beautifully."

"We cut them ourselves."

"My stars! you amaze me! why Mrs. More, I wonder if there 's *any thing* under the sun that your girls *can't* do."

"Yes—they can't play on the piano. I had them learn to cut and fit of Miss Curtis, before she went away—and ever since they have made all our dresses."

"My stars! If that is n't a grand idea. You are such a *capital* manager, Mrs. More. Mr. Shaw often remarks that Dr. More's family is a model for its admirable management—and it is *so*. It seems to me I should be the happiest woman in the world if I could be independent of hired girls and mantua-makers. I tell Mr. Shaw they 're the plague of my life. Oh, if my girls could make their own dresses and have them fit as exquisitely as Carry's and Lotty's do, I should be *so* rejoiced. How dreadfully Mary Barber's dresses hang on her. By the way, Mrs. More, did you know that old Mrs. Barber is quite sick?"

"Oh, yes, she 's been sick some time."

"Is Dr. More her physician?"

"No—they employ Dr. Smith, I believe."

"My stars! you amaze me, Mrs. More! that miser-

able homœpathist! Astonishing that people will be such fools! to think of their trusting her in his hands, when there 's such a skillful physician as Dr. More close by; why I have n't the least confidence in that kind of practice—and Dr. More enjoys such a reputation too! Mr. Shaw says that if Dr. Billings had n't been our family physician before Dr. More came here, he should certainly have employed Dr. More. However, Mrs. More, between you and me, I presume Dr. More has escaped an undesirable job. I should think old Mrs. Barber would be an excessively disagreeable patient. She is so *very* repulsive when she 's well. Don't you think so?"

"Well, I don't know; she s rather reserved—though I like her."

"Reserved! my stars! she 's as cold as an icicle—I don't see how you *can* like her, especially when she has treated Dr. More so shabbily."

"I *did* feel rather hurt that they discharged Dr. More; but they were urged by some of their friends to try the homœopathic system. It 's not from any want of confidence in Dr. More—they are very friendly to him—and I dare say they 'll employ him again, at some future time, if they 're not satisfied with Dr. Smith's practice."

"Well, I hope that Dr. More will decline attending them; he certainly ought to do so. I went in there this morning from a sense of duty. I never call upon

any but my particular friends, except in case of sickness; and the Barbers are such a queer family. I never know what to make of them. But I *must* go; I always stay so long when I come here. I tell Mr Shaw I never know when to get away from Dr. More's. I do think *so* much of your family. Now do come round Mrs. More; you *never* come—and the girls are not sociable at all; do come. Seraph and I are *so* lonely, etc. etc."—(Imagine the rest).

She next proceeds to Dr. Smith's.

"Good morning, Mrs. Smith."

"Good morning, Mrs. Shaw; you look fatigued; take the rocking-chair—do."

"Thank you, Mrs. Smith, I will, for I *am* quite weary; have made several calls this morning; calls are an awful bore to me in my state of health, except when I go to see my particular friends."

"Sure—is your health not good, Mrs. Shaw?"

"It's miserable, Mrs. Smith—miserable. I really ought to be at home and in bed now, but I told Mr. Shaw that the morning was *so* fine, I must get round and see Mrs. Smith. I've so long been wishing to come. Mr. Shaw thought I was rather imprudent to walk so far; but I told him I would stop and rest several times on the way. I would n't attempt to take such a walk except to see a very *particular friend*, which I hope I may call you, Mrs. Smith."

"Certainly, Mrs. Shaw—you do me much honor. I hope you will not be the worse for the exertion. Have you been long an invalid?"

"I have *so;* my health has been very precarious for some years. O, Mrs. Smith, you can not imagine how excessively tired I've become of taking such quantities of medicine as the old-fashioned doctors give. I tell Mr. Shaw the very sight of it disgusts me."

"Sure."

"I've heard *so* much of Dr. Smith's astonishing success in his practice, that I should n't hesitate a moment to place myself under his care, and go through a course of homœpathic treatment, if it were not for fear of offending old Dr. Billings, who has always been our family physician; and we are fearful he might feel hurt, you know."

"Sure—but I do not think he would be. Dr. Smith has one of Dr. *More's* patients, Mrs. Barber, under his care; and Dr. More does n't appear to be at all displeased about it."

"I think you're mistaken, Mrs. Smith, for I've heard Mrs. More speak of it with considerable bitterness. She said *her* feelings were very much hurt at the Barbers' discharging her husband. Though she remarked that she felt confident they would become dissatisfied with Dr. Smith, and send for Dr. More again."

"Well, I declare! I'll tell the doctor of that—

it's the first time I've heard of any one's speaking against my husband's practice."

"You know, Mrs. Smith, Dr. More is a very penurious man, and of course would not like to have a rich patient slip through his fingers."

"Is he a *close* man? I did n't know it before."

"He is *so*—are you acquainted with the family?"

"No—Mrs. More has never called on me."

"Well, that's not strange—it *costs* something you know to keep up an acquaintance."

"I thought they were quite a genteel family."

"Genteel!—my stars! they are excessively plain."

"I'm sure the daughters dress in good style."

"I'm aware of that, Mrs. Smith; but they pinch and save in every other way."

"Sure!—how you talk!"

"They keep no servants at all, though Dr. More is abundantly able; there are few richer men in Greenville. Mrs. More works like a slave—and so do the girls."

"Sure!—how you talk, Mrs. Shaw!"

"I tell Mr. Shaw I do really pity those poor girls; notwithstanding the doctors' ample means, he has never given them the advantage of a genteel education."

"Sure! You don't say so, Mrs. Shaw!"

"Just *so*, Mrs. Smith—they've not even learnt music!"

"Mercy on us!"

"But they 've taken lessons in ———, what do you think?—just *guess*, Mrs. Smith."

"Well, I 'm sure I can't tell—is it drawing?"

"Drawing! My stars! You 'd never guess till your dying day—dress-making!!"

"Mercy on us! he, he, he, he, he! how Ann Eliza would laugh to hear that. It 's the last thing I ever should have thought of."

"Why, Mr. Shaw says he 'd do any thing in the world before he 'd let me and the girls work as they do. He says if it took his last sixpence, Angel and Seraph should learn music."

"Sure—I should n't think Ann Eliza fit for genteel society, unless she could play on the piano—how I *should* feel if her pa should want her to make her own dresses."

"You would *so*, Mrs. Smith—it 's the only *accomplishment* that the More's possess; and no wonder they carry it to such *perfection*, and pinch up their waists to the size of a chair-post. Did you ever see such sights as their waists?"

"They are very small, indeed."

"They look perfectly ridiculous—Mr. Shaw can't bear such forms; he says a little waist is a deformity rather than a beauty."

"I think so to. I've never let Ann Eliza lace tight."

"Well, you have acted very judiciously, Mrs. Smith; how is Ann Eliza?"

"She 's quite well, thank you. She 's gone out this morning to make calls."

"Well, I hope she 'll go round to our house. Seraph would be *so* delighted to see her—Ann Eliza 's a lovely girl. I 'm told she was a great belle at Coonville."

"Well, it 's not for me to say as to that."

"Of course—but you can't help being proud of her, Mrs. Smith. How sweetly she looked last Sabbath day! Mr. Shaw remarked it. He admires her style of beauty excessively. I observed she had on one of the new-fashioned capes. Angeleen writes me that they 're very much worn by the *first* in New York."

"Yes—Ann Eliza heard they were very fashionable among genteel people. Have you heard from Angeleen, lately?"

"Received a letter yesterday—she 's very happy, says she 's engaged in one constant round of parties and swearees—just what Angel likes, you know; she 's *so* fond of society. She says, give my love to all the girls, but particularly to Ann Eliza Smith. She *does* love Ann Eliza. But I *must* go."

"Don't be in haste, Mrs. Shaw."

"O, I 've staid a long time. I always *do* stay forever when I come here. Now do come round Mrs. Smith—run in at any time—don't be ceremonious

I never use any ceremony with my particular friends. Tell Ann Eliza to come round, etc. etc."

Her next call is at Mr. Price's, the minister.

"How *do* you *do*, Mrs. Price?"

"Quite well, thank you—how are you, Mrs. Shaw?"

"Poorly, Mrs. Price—quite poorly."

"I'm very sorry to hear it."

"Really, Mrs. Price, I must take you to task for not coming round to see me this long time. You've not done your duty as a minister's wife."

"I've not been able to go, Mrs. Shaw. Gustus has been sick with the measels, and I've not been out at all for three weeks."

"My stars! how you shock me, Mrs. Price. I have n't heard a word of Augustus being sick, or I should certainly have been round; I always go to see the sick if I am able to crawl—but my health is so precarious that I very seldom get out. I told Mr. Shaw the morning was *so* fine I *must* get out and see my minister's folks, though it's a very long walk for me. How is dear little Gusty now?"

"Much better—so as to be able to go to school today."

'I'm very glad—very indeed. Augustus is such a noble boy—Mr. Shaw says he is without exception the finest child he ever saw. What a mercy that the Lord saw fit to spare him!

"It was, indeed—I feel to be thankful."

"Is Mr. Price at home?"

"He is. I'll speak to him."

"Now don't disturb him, Mrs. Price, if he's engaged; but his conversation is *so* instructive I would like excessively to see him."

"Ah, Mr. Price, I hope you 're well—quite well?"

"Perfectly so, Sister Shaw. I trust you are in the enjoyment of more comfortable corporeal health than has recently fallen to your lot?"

"I regret that I am not, Mr. Price—my health is very delicate—I assure you, it was a great exertion for me to walk so far this morning. I told Mr. Shaw I would n't have thought of going such a distance to see any one but you and Mrs. Price."

"Y-e-s—I assure you, Sister Shaw, I appreciate the effort, and am truly gratified to see you."

"Thank you, Mr. Price, it does me *so* much good to talk with you occasionally."

"Y-e-s—well, how do you f-e-e-l now, Sister Shaw, in regard to your mind?"

"O, Mr. Price, I can not say that I always feel as I ought to—owing to the precarious state of my health, my feelings are variable."

"Y-e s—quite natural they should be so."

"Sometimes I feel a degree of coldness and apathy, and am almost tempted to give up my hope; and again I experience great comfort, and my evidences of acceptance are very strong."

"Y-e-s—as a general thing, you enjoy religion, I suppose?"

"I do *so*—O, Mr. Price, what should I do without religion? I tell Mr. Shaw, that with my miserable health, religion is my only support."

"Y-e-s—how does Mr. Shaw feel?"

"O, Mr. Price, I regret to say, that he does not feel his lost and ruined condition as sensibly as I could wish O! O! if that man *only* had saving faith—and if Serapheen was *only* a Christian—my happiness would be complete!"

"Y-e-s—I trust that you wrestle for them, without ceasing at the throne of grace?"

"I do *so*, Mr. Price—I do *so*."

"Y-e-s—and do you feel, that in case the Lord should see fit to disregard your petitions, and consign them to everlasting misery, you could acquiesce in his decrees, and rejoice in their destruction?"

"I feel that I could without a murmur."

"Y-e-s—I am very happy, Sister Shaw, to find you in such a desirable state of mind."

"But, Mr. Price, I feel at times excessively exercised, in view of the low state of religion in Greenville, now."

"Y-e-s—it is truly melancholy, the ways of Zion languish."

"They do *so*—it 's time we had another protracted meeting. I don't know when I 've had my feelings *so*

tried as they have been this morning, to see the coldness and worldliness of some of our people. On my way here, I stopped to rest at several places—and O, my dear Mr. Price! it was so distressing to witness the unconcern that was manifested."

"Y-e-s."

"I called at Mrs. Barber's—they 're very irreligious people you know."

"Y-e-s—no experimental acquaintance with saving faith."

"None whatever. The old lady 's quite sick—on her death-bed, perhaps—I did n't see her—they did n't ask me to go in—you know they 're very peculiar people—so distant. I *did* want to see her, and find out how she *felt*—and whether she expected to get to heaven on good works now. You know you used to think she did."

"Y-e-s—I had reason to suppose so, from her conduct."

"It would be dreadful, if the old lady should die in such a state of mind—would n't it, Mr. Price?"

"Y-e-s—

> 'Behold the aged sinner goes,
> Laden with guilt and heavy woes,
> Down *to* the regions *of* the dead
> With endless curses *on* her head.'

How remarkably those words of the sacred poet apply to her case!"

"They do *so*. I did n't see Mrs. George Barber nei

ther. She was with the old lady—but I saw Mary—what a hardened girl she is! Why, Mr. Price, she actually called on the name of the adversary of souls in the course of her conversation. I *never* was so shocked!"

"Dreadful! awfully dreadful, Sister Shaw!"

"And the Mores, too—I was in there—how excessively worldly they are—think of nothing but making and saving money—and what *is* money good for? nothing—just nothing, Mr. Price—it 's the root of all evil, Mr. Price."

"Y-e-s—y-e-s."

Though poor Mr. Price thought in his heart that a little of that same root would n't come amiss to him.

"And Dr. Smith's people—I called there, too—what a poor, silly woman, Mrs. Smith is—entirely devoted to the world and its follies. She thinks more of having her daughter shine in society, than she does of saving her soul, I *do* believe. O, Mr. Price, I was sick at heart—I could have wept as I sat there, and heard that woman run on about her daughter being a belle, and dressing in style and all that. Poor Ann Eliza! she has no parent to wrestle for her at the throne of grace, as my dear Serepheen has! I do *feel* for her—no wonder that she 's such a trifling thoughtless thing."

"Y-e-s—it is truly melancholy to be in her condition."

"O, there 's an alarming state of things in Greenville now, Mr. Price—we *must* have a protracted meeting, Mr. Price."

"Y-e-s, Sister Shaw, we must endeavor to do so."

"I feel as if *something* must be done for impenitent sinners in Greenville. It 's three years since we had a special effort—'t was before you came here, Mr. Price—there was a great outpouring of the Spirit—Angeleen experienced religion—and I feel to believe, that if we could have another, Mr. Shaw and Serapheen would come out. And then a great many of those that were hopefully converted at the last meeting, have gone back into the world, and want to be re-converted. We must get up a revival, Mr. Price. Don't you think so?"

"Y-e-s, I feel convinced that a protracted effort might be signally blest if the church would come up to the work. Speaking of your absent daughter, Sister Shaw have you heard from her lately?"

"I have *so*—received a letter yesterday She desired to be particularly remembered to her dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Price."

"Y-e-s, thank you—did she say what was the state of religion in New York now?"

"Very *low*, she says—very low, indeed. She attends Dr. Kittles' church with her uncle's family; but she says she *does* want to hear one of your excellent, spiritual sermons again Mr. Price. She 's heartily

sick of the gayety of the city. She 's obliged to mingle in it some, you know; but such things are very uncongenial to Angel's taste. She *does* long to come home to her old friends, and sit under her dear Mr. Price's preaching once more. Angel is very much attached to you and Mrs. Price, and *so* fond of retirement. 'Ma,' she says in her letter, 'I 'm utterly worn out with visits, parties, and swearees.'"

"Swearees! I trust those are not, as the name imports, profane assemblages."

"By no means, Mr. Price, 'Swearees' is the French for 'ice-cream parties;' but I *must* go—my visits here are *so* refreshing. I always stay longer than I intend to. What an intensely interesting sermon you gave us last Sabbath day, Mr. Price it did me *so* much good. Mr. Shaw was excessively delighted with it—'*that's* what I call preaching,' said he to me, as we were going home. O, Mr. Price, it is *such* a deprivation to me not to be able to attend the evening prayer-meeting oftener, but my health is *so* precarious that I can not do as inclination prompts; but I *feel* that such deprivations are sent as trials to my faith."

"Y-e-s, undoubtedly, Sister Shaw—and I trust that your faith will be strengthened by them."

"I do most *ardently* hope so—but I *must* go—now *do* come round, Mr. Price, and you, Mrs. Price, I think *so* much of having you come."

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